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OF
QUEEN BESS.

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AUTHOR OF "THE AGE AND ITS ARCHITECTS," "SELF-EDUCATION,"
"THE DARK DAYS OF QUEEN MARY," ETC.

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THE GOLDEN DAYS OF GOOD QUEEN BESS.

CHAPTER I.

TRIUMPHANT MOMENTS.

THERE has been, we believe, but one instance of the unaffected and loud demonstration of joy and merriment upon the occasion of the death of a sovereign, but when Queen Mary died, the joy and rapture of the Londoners knew no bounds. The streets of London, at that time, probably presented a very similar appearance to those of Paris in our own day. Before the doors stood trees, beneath which the people were in the habit of sitting and indulging in their mirth and festivity. Although then the 17th of November was a winterly day, it was regarded as a bright, shining summer

day by the London citizens. The bells of the churches were set a-ringing, as for a great prince who had achieved a victory, rather than for a queen, who had been summoned by the finger of Death. Tables were spread in the streets; the foaming ale-can passed from hand to hand; large bonfires were kindled at night; the whole city was given up to the most evident indications of joy; a load had been lifted from the heart of the nation; the bustling citizens, as they passed to and fro, smiled cheerily upon one another, and few were the families where something more substantial than a smile did not show the hearty gladness of the universal mind. On the following Sunday the *Te Deum* was chaunted in the churches. All this was unexampled, but it was a well merited expression of the opinion of the nation of its departed cruel sovereign, and that sovereign a woman.

Meantime, the future sovereign lady of the realm, Elizabeth, who had for some time been confined a prisoner at Hatfield, then a beautiful mansion, received the news of her sister's death and of her own exaltation, so far as we can learn, in a very becoming manner. She did not affect any great sorrow for the death of her sister. How could she do so? She certainly

did not give evidence of any exultation, but first falling upon her knees, she exclaimed,—“It is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.” This was the inscription she placed during her reign upon her gold. After the long and varied agitations of the preceding reign, those surely must have been triumphant moments, which, if they did not promise her entire repose, did yet place her beyond the reach of sisterly caprice and persecution.

Elizabeth instantly, upon the news of her sister’s death, appointed a Council of State at Hatfield. The principal person she called to her aid was Sir William Cecil, of whom by-and-bye we shall give a more full and lengthy history. Her charge to him has been faithfully preserved to us, and whether she intended it should be faithfully adhered to or not, it was so; this man called first to support her by his prudence and sagacity, through all his life adhered to her. Never had monarch a more faithful and judicious adviser.

“I give you,” said the queen to him, on the occasion of investing him with the power of secretary of state,—“I give you this charge, that you shall be of my privy council, and content yourself to take pains for me and my realm. The judgment I have of you, that you will not

be corrupted by any gift, and that you will be faithful to the State ; and that, without respect of my private will, you will give me that counsel that you think best ; and that, if you shall know any thing necessary to be declared to me of secrecy, you shall show it to myself only ; and assure yourself I will not fail to keep taciturnity therein. And, therefore, herewith I charge you."

The queen remained at Hatfield about a week after her accession to the throne. She then set forth on her progress to London. Everywhere as she passed along, she beheld the indications that upon her the hopes of the nation were fixed. At Highgate she was met by a procession, headed by all the bishops who knelt to receive her on the highway. She gave them all her hand to kiss, excepting Bonner, the Bishop of London. She was then met by the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of the city of London, who conducted her to the Charter House, where she took up her abode for five days. She then went in procession to take possession of the Tower, at that time the State prison and the State palace ; at once a regal, a warlike, and a legal fortress. Her last visit there had been as a prisoner ; nor were there wanting in the nation those who would

gladly have beheld her carried, like Lady Jane Grey, to the block upon the green : but she was spared to head a triumph as she passed along.

We notice it as indicative of the state of the streets, that they were carefully spread over with fine gravel. There were no well flagged and well paved highways at that time. As she passed along on horseback, the acclamations rending the air would be prompted by sympathy with her old sufferings ; for the prince or princess who has sorrowed and known adversity, has a mighty hold upon the sympathies of the suffering thousands who flock around his chariot or his steed. So she passed along to that proud old Julian fortress, once her dun-geon, now her seat of empire and of power, before, when on the Palm Sunday, while all the people were at the churches, her barge shot along in silence and in secrecy ; she looked around and beheld not a friendly face to greet her or give her comfort. On a dark, wild, rainy morning, in the cheerless, winterly March, she, then a pale, terrified, and weeping girl, in the custody of hard-featured, hard-hearted men, landed at the Tower, and passed through the Traitor's Gate, to her gloomy and cheerless confinement, but now caparisoned with pomp



and majesty, while the surge and swell of the waves of popular applause rolled upon her ear, she entered by the great gates surrounded by her Lords ; and there was one riding next to her, with whom her name came to be curiously linked through many long years, Lord Robert Dudley, her Master of Horse, and like herself newly restored to importance and power from imprisonment and adversity. That dark face and covert eye ; that suspicious and sneering lip, how they seem to look out upon us through that long procession, which now our imagination so vividly calls up, although rider and steed have so long since passed into dust.

Mary all this time lay dead in her palace at Westminster. The members of the Romish Church were called upon loudly to wail forth their masses, for almost at the instant of Mary's death, Cardinal Pole, her kinsman, and the head of the Papal Hierarchy in England, followed her through the long dark avenue ; and two Romish Bishops of Rochester and Chichester were also lying dead ; thus the Cathedrals rung with the masses for the souls of the illustrious departed ; and no doubt there mingled with the solemn tones of the sobbing chaunt, real anxiety for the future destiny of that Faith which seemed in England expiring

with its defenders. Elizabeth attended her sister's funeral, on which occasion Dr. White, the Bishop of Winchester, preached what Sir John Harrington called "A black sermon!" The text from which the bishop illustrated the virtues of his departed mistress, was a curious one—"Melior est canis vivus leone mortuo,"—"A living dog is better than a dead lion." The sermon was in Latin, but Elizabeth was Latin scholar enough to understand not only the curish text but the curish allusions. Amongst other things he roundly asserted that the dead deserved more praise than the living, for that Mary had chosen the better part. To a lady of Elizabeth's temperament all this was not especially pleasant, and as soon as the bishop descended from the pulpit he was placed under arrest; he defied her Majesty, and threatened her with excommunication. At this she simply laughed. He appears to have been emulous of a martyr's crown, and she very wisely determined he should not have it. Henceforth the bishop passes out of our sight, and we see him no more.

But enough of funeral thoughts and ceremonies. All people were looking forward to the coronation; and although it was winter, the citizens of London made grand gala de-

monstrations that almost cheat us into the idea of spring. Old Father Thames was at that time the great highway; carriages there were none; the streets were narrow and contracted; and the absence of all sewerage and macadamization would make them very undesirable places for travelling. But how pleasant to lounge in the boat, and thus be oared gaily and delightfully down the stream upon the Thames. Thus the queen would proceed to the Tower, and thence pass through the city in what was then deemed necessary, a sort of recognition civic procession; but before this could be done, Dr. Dee, the great astrologer and necromancer, had to be consulted, in order that he might pronounce which would be the luckiest day for the coronation. Dee stood high in the favour of Elizabeth. We shall give some account of him further on in the course of this book. Elizabeth frequently had secret deliberations with this notorious quack; and at last, after many deliberations, the day was fixed by Dee, the fortunate day, Sunday, the 15th of January; she also appointed the preceding day Saturday, the 14th, for her recognition procession.

Thus, then, upon the 12th, she started from Westminster by water to the Tower. The

liveries and badges of the nobles at that time did not indicate coachmen and grooms so much as watermen and rowers. The "Strand," even now of course intimates to us a spot lining the course of the river, and at the time of which we write it was about being occupied by the palaces and mansions of the great peers of England. The gondolas of Venice are not a more common method of transit there, than was the barge or the elegant wherry upon the Thames in this old day. On the banks of the river the royal palaces stood—Greenwich and Richmond—the gardens, which were now beginning to bear evidence of cultivation, and to put on the robes of beauty, sloped down to the water side, and gay enough must have been the scene, when upon the river any royal procession passed ; all the gaudy lavishments of a meretricious age would be beheld there ; dresses, at that time, abounding with gay colours ; streamers from every vessel, and window ; and every civic company, and every noble house, with its retinue of glittering pomp and sheeny magnificence. Such a day was the 12th of January, 1558. As the royal barge laboured through the waters it was met and surrounded by all the barges of the Companies of London, enriched with their carved and gilded figures,

and targets, and banners, illustrative of their mysteries, and so to the clash of bells, and the swell of pleasant and melodious music, and the rattle of artillery, they bore the queen to the Tower.

After staying at the Tower a day or two, and there knighting several persons, she proceeded to the Palace of Whitehall, through a very long, and what seems now, very tedious triumphal pageant. Of these magnificent shows and allegorical devices we have now no relics, save in the very copious descriptions of the annalists of the periods to which they belong. Of this the first great progress of the queen, (the first of a series of progresses, abounding with the stage effect of ancient mythology, and fiction, and fable,) the details are full ; so that the wonders and exhibitions of every street are all known, and the fancy finds it a comparatively easy task to elbow the way through the crowd ; for, London, and all its neighbourhood, poured forth their swarms of people, though the population of London at that time, and Westminster combined, but little exceeded that of Edinburgh or Liverpool in our time. We have to take our way through Fanchurch Street, leaving a little the old ruined monastery of Leadenhall, and down the Cornhill, Cheap-

side, passing St. Paul's Cross, now locked up, but the great open air rostrum of Papists and Reformers, and old St. Paul's Church ; thence through Fleet Street, and along the Strand to Whitehall. Of all these places little is left beside the name ; their character is altogether gone. Here and there, indeed, we notice some curious old gable, indicating the house of the olden time, but all are changed. The taste of the English people, even in London, in those times, was not very advanced or refined, and, accordingly, the history of the procession is rather interesting, as showing to us plainly, now standing here, the social position and general habits and manners of the good metropolitan citizens. All the highway, as the queen passed along, resembled a stage ; scaffolds were erected, children, standing upon them, recited their various congratulatory verses ; banners, and streamers with appropriate inscriptions, fluttered in the air ; and in every place, where any device could be bestowed, there was one placed. At that moment people and queen rejoiced together ; the air was rent with their hearty and vehement shoutings, and she received graciously every present ; and in the course of her progress by many a little act of kindly courtesy she won golden opinions from

all. The first incident took place at Fanchurch Street, where stood a very richly ornamented scaffold, upon which was a child in most costly apparel. The queen caused her chariot to be stayed the while he delivered a welcoming oration; the address was in verse, and we may as well recite a verse or two :—

“Oh, peerless sovereigne queen ! behold, what this thy
town

Hath thee presented with at thy first entrance here !
Behold, with how rich hope she leadeth thee to thy crown !
Behold, with what gifts she comforteth thy cheer !
Welcome, therefore, oh queen, as much as harte can think !
Welcome, again, oh queen as much as tong can tell !
Welcome to joyous tongs, and hartes, that will not shrink !
God thee preserve, we pray ; and wish thee ever well !”

“At which words of the last line,” says the narrator, “the hole people gave a great shout, wishing with one assent as the child had said.” As she went forward, upon stages and scaffolds were the figures of her ancestors, of Henry VII., her grandfather, and Elizabeth of York, of Henry VIII, and of Anne Boleyn, and a number of other figures ; perhaps they were not very exquisitely wrought, for we find that upon a scaffold by their side, another child was placed, to explain to the queen the meaning of this pageant ; and she perceiving this, sent

messengers desiring the people to preserve so much silence that she might listen to the explanation. Truly they must have been a most orderly people, if even the royal request had much effect upon them in such circumstances. It is worthy of notice that much of this procession, although to us apparently so unmeaning, was really full of meaning to both queen and people. It was not, as most of such processions were, overladen with allusions to Grecian Mythology. No, in the pageant we may read the history of the mind of the people, we may read the history of their hopes and fears; they adopted this pageant as an opportunity to utter to the queen their wishes. Vulcan and Venus, Hercules and Hebe, Jupiter and Juno, figured frequently enough in other processions, but in this the figures were derived from another and far more serious school. Thus, in Cornhill was an emblem called the "seat of worthy governance:" there were eight emblematic devices, children in allegoric characters; these were Pure Religion treading on Superstition—Love of Subject treading upon Rebellion and Insolence—Wisdom treading upon Folly and Vain Glory; and Justice treading upon Adulation and Bribery.

At that time, upon Cornhill, stood the Great

and Little Conduit, by which water was conveyed from Tyburn to the city. Formerly upon this spot had stood a prison, called "The Tun;" and in the times of Elizabeth there yet remained "a strong prison of timber," called "The Cage," with a pair of stocks and a pillory for bakers offending in the assize of bread. All this was now out of sight; and here was a scaffolding, surpassing any seen yet in magnificence. The queen enquired, before she reached it, what was there? She was told that there was placed "Time." "Time," quoth she, "Time, and Time hath brought me hither!"

That was the Age of Allegory. Pictures are for children, and very appropriately so; for, in the first dawning of Intelligence, the eye is wiser than the ear; and so, in the dawn of the Intelligence of States and Nations, Truth has to be represented and painted to the vision, rather than expressed by continued argument. We shall see, by-and-bye, how this characteristic of the Age developed itself in the writings of Spenser and Sydney. It was fully shewn in the whole course of this royal progress.—This pageant of the Little Conduit appears to have been the most various and interesting in the whole course of the procession, for there

the Bible was presented to her, let down into her car by a silken lace ; and there amidst the Companies of the city, with banners and streamers flying around from all the windows and pent-houses, surrounded by the rich fur clad burgesses and aldermen of Old London, stood the Right Worshipful Master Ranulph Cholmely, the Recorder of the City, who gave into the hands of the Queen's Majesty a purse with a thousand marks, which "the queen took with both hands, and answered him again marvellous pithily." There was in this pageant another, which shows how clear were many of the ideas expressed in the pictured shows. There were represented two mountains, one craggy, barren, and stony, upon which appeared a tree stunted, and withered, and dead ; and at the foot of it appeared a figure in rude apparel, mourning, over whose head was written, in Latin and English, "Ruinos a Respublica," a "Decayed Commonweal ;" and all around the tree were placed tablets, indicating the causes of a nation's decay. On the other side was another hill, the ground of which was green, and full of flowers and beauty ; and there was represented a tree also, fresh and vigorous, and fair ; and a figure, fresh and well arrayed beneath it, bearing this inscription in Latin and

English, "Respublica bene instituta," "a flourishing Commonweal;" and tables here also, shewing in what a Commonweal consisted; while from a door hidden between the hills advanced a venerable figure, representing Time leading one more youthful by the hand, clad in white, over whose head was inscribed "Temporis filia," "The Daughter of Time;" and on her breast "Veritas," "Truth." She had in her hand a book, on which was written "Verbam Veritas," "The Word of Truth." This book again was given to the queen, who kissed it, and laid it to her breast. The limits of these pages will not allow us to notice all the various incidents of the pageant thus presented, as the monarch passed along from the city to Westminster,—what figures of Deborah, the mother and restorer of Israel; with occasional emblematic figures of Gog and Magog; of Alboin and Corineus; while through all, Elizabeth put forth all those graces and arts of popularity which never monarch knew better how to use than she. "Yonder is an ancient citizen," said one of the knights, "attending her person, which weepeth and turneth his face backward, now may it be interpreted that he doth so for sorrow or gladness." "I warrant you that it is for gladness," replied the queen.

Poor women thrust nosegays innumerable into her hands ; she graciously accepted them all, and a bunch of rosemary, that was given to her by one poor woman on Fleet Bridge, was seen in her hand when she reached Westminster.

The next day, the 15th of January, 1558, with all the ceremonies usual to the occasion, the coronation took place. Of all the bishops in England, only one could be prevailed upon to perform the office—Owen Oglethorp, Bishop of Carlisle. The see of Canterbury was vacant. Michael Heath, the Archbishop of York, refused to perform the office ; and each of the prelates, except the one we have instanced, followed his example. It was thought Elizabeth had already sufficiently indicated her hatred to the Church of Rome, both by proclamation, and by admitting to her counsel men who were known not to be good Catholics. The ceremony, however, was performed. From the palace the queen proceeded to the abbey.—The streets were all new-gravelled, and laid with blue cloth, along which the procession passed ; at the hall she was met by all the choristers, with the bishop, mitred, at their head. He had at first refused, with his brethren, to perform the service ; but had, at

length, much to their annoyance, been won over. Before him were borne the crosses, and the priests, in their new copes, around him ; and so they proceeded to the abbey. There seems, then, great probability in the representation of some writers, that the Protestantism of Elizabeth was (partly, at least,) an act of political necessity. The Romanists thrust upon her a more defiant attitude than that which she might, perhaps, otherwise have assumed. No ! she was not an enthusiastic Protestant ; she would allow no one to speak irreverently of the sacrifice of the mass ; she never, all her life long, could tolerate married bishops. For a long time she retained a crucifix in her private chapel ; and the day after her coronation she gave an illustration of the coolness and the caution with which she intended to proceed in re-establishing the principles of the Reformation ; and Lord Bacon thus relates the anecdote :—

“ Queen Elizabeth, on the morrow of her coronation, (it being the custom to release prisoners at the inauguration of a prince,) went to the chapel ; and, in the great chamber, one of the courtiers, who was well known to her, either out of his own motion, or by the instigation of a wiser man, presented her with a

petition ; and, before a great number of courtiers, besought her with a loud voice, that now this good time, there might be four or five more principal prisoners released ; these were the four Evangelists, and the Apostle Paul, who had been long shut up in an unknown tongue, as it were, in prison, so as they could not converse with the common people. The queen answered, very gravely, that it was first best to inquire of themselves whether they would or not."

It was very soon found, in a convocation appointed by parliament, that the Evangelists and the Apostles did approve of their liberation.

And now, that the days of darkness had passed away, many of those who had treated her with meanness and discourtesy, trembled for their safety, and especially a member of the late queen's household: conscious that he had offered many petty affronts to Elizabeth, while she was under the cloud of the queen's displeasure, he came in a great fright to throw himself at her feet, on her first triumphant assumption of the regal office, and, in the most abject language, besought her not to punish him for his impertinences to her when princess. "Fear not," replied the queen ; "we are of the nature of

the lion, and cannot descend to the destruction of mice, and such small beasts."

To Sir Henry Bedingfield she archly observed, when he came to pay his duty to her at her first court, "Whenever I have a prisoner who requires to be safely and straitly kept, I shall send him to you." She was wont to tease him by calling him her jailor, when in a mirthful mood, but always treated him as a friend, and subsequently honoured him with a visit at his stately mansion, Oxburgh Hall, Norfolk.

Nor must we omit her charge to her judges, so noble, perspicuous, and simple. "Have a care over my people. You have my people—do you that which I ought to do. They are *my* people. Every man oppresseth and spoileth them without mercy. They cannot revenge their quarrels, nor help themselves. See unto them—see unto them, for they are my charge. I charge you, even as God hath charged me.—I care not for myself—my life is not dear to me. My care is for my people. I pray God, whoever succeedeth me, may be as careful as I am. They who know what cares I bear would not think I took any great joy in wearing a crown."

"These ears," said Dr. Jewel, "heard her Majesty speak these words."

Thus began the golden days of Queen Bess. She was a young woman and a maiden, but a firm, high-minded one ; and as soon as she held the reins of government, she grasped them with real firmness, undaunted by the probable coalition of all Catholic Europe against her.— She assumed a high tone in all her conferences with the princes of Europe, as high as the mightiest of her predecessors. She declined the offered mediation of Philip II. ; she chose to treat alone. She demanded the restoration of Calais from France, and it was guaranteed to her, at the expiration of eight years, by the French king, under a penalty of 500,000 crowns.

Quite regardless of the stigma upon her birth, she simply procured from parliament an act legitimating her title to the crown ; and this we must think a wise and judicious policy. Sir Thomas Gargrave, the Speaker of the House of Commons, craved leave to bring in a petition to her majesty, entreating that she would marry. She received the petition graciously, and made in reply a long oration.— “ From my years of understanding,” she said, “ knowing myself a servitor of Almighty God, I chose this kind of life, in which I do yet live, as a life most acceptable to Him, wherein I

thought I might best serve Him. From which my choice, if ambition of high estate offered me in marriage, the displeasure of the prince, the eschewing the danger of mine enemies, or the avoiding the peril of death, (whose messenger, the princess's indignation, was continually present before mine eyes,) by whose means if I know or do justly suspect, I will not now utter them,—or if the whole cause were my sister herself, I will not now charge the dead. Could all have drawn or dissuaded me, I would not now have remained in this virgin state wherein you see me. But so constant have I always continued in this determination, that though the words and youth may hardly seem to agree together, yet it is true that to this day I stand free from any other meaning.”

Then she drew from her finger her coronation ring, and shewing it to the Commons, told them, that “when she received that ring she had bound herself in marriage to the realm, and that it would be quite sufficient for the memorial of her name and her glory if, when she died, an inscription were engraved on a marble tomb, saying, ‘Here lieth Elizabeth, which lived a virgin and died a virgin.’”—Further, she said, “The manner of your peti-

tion I do like, and take in good part, for it is simple, and containeth no limitation of place or person. If it had been otherwise, I must have misliked it very much, and thought it in you a very great presumption, being unfit and altogether unmeet to require them that may command." And in conclusion she dismissed the deputation with these words, "I take your coming to me in good part, and give to you my hearty thanks, yet more for your good will and good meaning, than for your message."

These anecdotes will give to the reader a tolerably clear idea of the mind of the young queen. Boldness and determination ; conduct, not varnished by any carefulness for nicety of phraseology. She was new to the cares of royalty, but she had read, thought, and suffered, and thus had she acquired power. She had learned the lessons of command in the school of obedience. She was not disposed to lose her individual power in some other, perhaps, not so royal a character. In her disposition and in her appearance, she combined something of her father as well as of her mother. She was tall, fair, neat in her person and in feature, yet of a stately and majestic comportment ; yet if not of a sweet temper, by no means morose and sullen ; bold, cheerful,

affable, all the requisites that could endear her to the people, especially to those who contemplated her at a distance from the more haughty demeanour of the court. In the following pages we shall see her under various aspects, we are now standing upon the threshold of her reign—that wonderful reign—the true transition reign of England—the Mædevial period of our country. Ah ! if our pen could but catch the glow and the fire of the old time ! Stately men and stately dames all around us ; the land coloured every where with the sombre twilight tints of old romance ; cottage and castle yet haunted with the superstitions and shades of ignorance. On the banks of the Thames History performing her deeds in silence, but now, how plainly seen, changing laws, religion, manners ; the hum of a rising people in the grey morning of their brave youth, beginning to murmur on the ear ; ships sailing along the coast ; cities rising in the far-off fields, and all this in no small degree owing to the awe inspired by the name of Elizabeth abroad, and the confidence and love inspired at home.

CHAPTER II.

ENGLAND AND EUROPE IN THE DAYS OF
QUEEN BESS.

THE great external fact of the reign of Elizabeth, is the mighty reaction against protestantism, which, mainly from the preaching of Ignatius Loyola, and the practices of his followers, the Jesuits, set in over a considerable portion of Europe; a reaction from which protestantism has never yet recovered itself. This fact, however, became important to England, because it was used by the Catholic Church in its efforts to bring our land back to homage and obedience. The one thing which gives prominency and distinction to the reign of this Queen, is, that she, beyond any sovereign before her, asserted and maintained, throughout her whole reign, the independence of the nation; this gives to her reign that air of imposing dignity: foreign prince, or foreign prelate, both were

warned not to interfere ; Pontiff, Emperor, or King, all were prevented from intermeddling with the domestic affairs of the land. Perhaps this may be mentioned as the great purpose for which the Tudors so long grasped the sceptre of sovereignty ; with the exception of Mary, all of them, the miserly Henry VII., and the passionate Henry VIII., all of them maintained the right of England to an independent place in the scale of nations ; perhaps the protestantism of Henry VIII., and Elizabeth, did not extend much beyond this point, but it was a most important principle, the sovereignty of the sovereign in temporal matters. In wresting this from the Pope, indeed, they grasped also the spiritual sovereignty ; and at present it seems difficult to perceive how the one could have been secured without seizing the other ; we may wish that it had been otherwise, but in a period when the sovereign was, next to the Bishop of Rome, the great centralization of power ; when the people were not recognized as a fountain of power, it is not, surely, easy to see how the headship of government could be asserted, without also asserting the headship of the church ; the authority of the Pope, in the last, had to be struck down, in order that the blow aimed at his authority in the former, might be a suc-

cessful one. Elizabeth was compelled, on her accession to the throne, to be decidedly protestant; Paul IV., the reigning Pontiff, was incapable of moderation, and when she signified her accession to him, he returned a repulsive and contemptuous reply to her ambassador. "First of all," said he, "she must submit her claims to the decision of our judgment." But, in the judgment of the Court of Rome, she had no claim to the throne of England; her mother, Anne Boleyn, was never the rightful wife of Henry, in the estimation of the Pontiff and the Vatican. Her faithfulness to Rome was at best but doubtful; it is easy to see, that the submission of her claims to Paul, would have probably been to hand over her crown to Mary, the Dauphiness of France, and subsequently the Queen of Scotland. Elizabeth, however, was not disposed to submit her claims to the adjudication of either Paul or Peter; she reigned by the call of her people to the throne, as well as by their common sense interpretation of her hereditary right, and she determined to defend her throne with true English spirit. England, then, was the asylum of liberty and independence. We read many tales of the tyranny of Elizabeth, and doubtless many are well-founded, but a monarch fighting the battle of

freedom with foreign princes, must be diffusing the spirit of liberty abroad and at home ; and Elizabeth was fighting such a battle, not the less because she fought with peaceful weapons. During the greater part of her reign she was regarded all over Europe as the great defender of liberty ; as such she was regarded, too, by the mighty princes, her cotemporaries, and, therefore, there was a desire felt through all the courts of Europe, that her power might be broken, and her kingdom given to another.

Rome was earnestly bent upon the destruction of protestantism in Europe. A mighty league was formed for the defence of the Catholic Church. The brave people of the Netherlands, Holland, and Belgium, suffered the most amazing persecution which any people, in any era of the world's history, were ever called to undergo. Spain, ever true to her creed of Romanism and blood, sent forth her knights, and poured forth her treasure to waste and destroy those noble people. Meantime, the Jesuits, who had been looked upon by the Church of Rome generally, with an eye of exceeding jealousy, spread over the whole of the continent, and began their course of perverting and mischievous teaching in England. Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Order of St. Jesus,

commenced his career some years before. From attentively perusing the life of this most extraordinary man, it does not appear that he intended to found a society so closely entwined as this has been with the mere temporal politics of the Romish Church ; certainly he intended the establishment of an institution which should rapidly, and by any means judged best, by the fountain of Romish authority and power, convert to the Romish faith. Obedience, implicit and unhesitating obedience, was the great central doctrine of the society ; commissioned by the heads of the order, the members were traversing the continent in silence and obscurity, labouring indefatigably to bring back the backsliders to the faith, and sworn to the prosecution of measures the most horrid and unnatural, for the purpose of destroying the growing opinion against Rome ; and when the persecution of the Jesuits, during the reign of Elizabeth, is insisted on, let it be remembered, that they came to the country specially commissioned to conspire against the prosperity and life both of the Queen, and her people, and the realm.

The independence of England was the main spring of Elizabeth's foreign policy ; this she pursued fearlessly and consistently. To defend all

her actions now, is impossible, many are quite indefensible and in the maintainance of the settled principle of her government, very much transpires with which no good man can have a moment's sympathy. That was a very doubtful morality which impelled her to seize upon five sail of richly laden Spanishmen, carrying stores and money for the payment of King Philip's men in the Low Countries. The ships had sought shelter on her coast, from a Protestant fleet; she hesitated, the money on board those ships was to pay the cruel and merciless men who were crushing the life out of a brave Protestant people; finally, she resolved on seizing the ships. The Spanish Ambassador entreated, remonstrated, but in vain; she was also in want of money, and covering her action with some subterfuges which it is needless to say, were not very honest or truthful, she appropriated the gold of Spain to her purposes. Drake also humbled the Spanish power by his privateering expeditions, both on the coasts of Europe and America; and when he returned home, Queen Elizabeth paid a considerable sum out of the treasure brought home by the great navigator, to certain merchants who sent to her court to demand satisfaction for having been "unjustly robbed." The rest of the booty

rewarded the privateers. If most of the English, with their queen, gloried in the advantages that unquestionably resulted from these naval exploits, there were some few at least who had regard to the rights that had been violated ; for, according to Camden, nothing troubled Drake more than the refusal of some of the chief men at court to accept the gold which he offered them, because it was "gotten by piracy." The names of those chief men would have been worth preserving. On the other hand, it does not seem to have been piracy that the Spaniards complained of most. They of course saw, and with most excited passions, that their most exclusive naval dominion was about to be wrested from them. Mendoza, the Spanish ambassador, complained with arrogant violence, of Drake's having so much as dared to sail in the Indian sea. Elizabeth's spirited reply is the first instance of the absolute assertion of England's right of navigating the ocean in all its parts, a right none has since that time been able to take from us. She told Mendoza plainly, that a title to the ocean could not belong to any people, or private persons, "forasmuch as neither nature, nor public use and custom, permitteth any possession thereof."—This was indeed one of the occasions when Elizabeth's clearness of intellect

and determined will achieved advantages of priceless value to the empire.

Of course these actions are not to be commended in these days, when a system so much nobler and more generous rules both the transactions of the land, and the sea. But these events taught useful lessons especially to Spain ; strange spectacle enough truly, a little land, a dot upon the waters, with its insignificant population of about four millions, thus defying the most princely and magnificent nation of the world ; the nation claiming the sovereignty of the seas, and exercising more influence than any other over the various courts of Europe. Spain, around whose palaces the gold of the Indies flowed like water ; Spain beheld the sceptre of Power falling from her grasp, her arm paralysed and powerless, before the superior tact and policy of the rising power of Liberty and Commerce. Clearly then to be seen and understood, the reign of Elizabeth must be studied first, externally ; studied with especial reference to the elements at work in Europe generally. Now, England starts before the old time-worn monarchies ; a new power struggling for new things ; all that she had struggled for hitherto, had been in union with the ambitions of monarchies, and the golden chains the princes

of that day were content to wear. But there were some in Europe who looked with intense interest to the part that England seemed likely to play, amidst the wild agonising of the people for more truth and more freedom ; many were the attempts made to bind her in with the trammels of policy or of association. Philip of Spain attempted marriage with Elizabeth, but the negative was instant and decided. Then he tried the bondage of the negociatory cord, but this too was useless : and France left no means untried to bring about a marriage, but in vain ; England stood alone. Meantime she waved her flag, by no means a flag of mercy, but of terrible power, over seas untracked save by the Spanish navigator ; that flag, it is to be feared, gave few traces of its waving in a Christian land ; but fearfully as it blazed along, it proclaimed the might and enterprise of the land from whence it came ; and the quiet merchantmen were raising for England an independent commercial greatness and fame. They were teaching in that day a policy more liberal than their neighbours ; and thus on every hand a bold and unhesitating independence invested the name and character of everything English. It characterised the queen herself, defying the most venerable authority in Europe, in the per-

son of the Bishop of Rome—and the most wealthy and potent monarchs ; it characterised her navigators, piercing into every sea and coasting far and near around all discovered or undiscovered shores ; it characterised her merchants, attempting to carry trade and commerce to all, to whom intercommunion and barter could be a blessing and a reciprocation of interests ; it characterised her people, roused and fairly awakened to the value of the liberty already enjoyed, and resolutely bent upon resistance to any attempt at invading it, while yet disposed to press on boldly for more ; in all these varieties of profession, unanimous in one feature of character, may be seen the several displays of one great phase, which, fused down into the page of History, gives magnificent prominence to the “Times of Queen Bess.”

Thus stood England and England's queen with reference to Foreign Powers. This attitude of independence we have called its extreme position, but this was of course most naturally the result of a series of influences working within, at home. There was not only an external, there was an internal Fact, this was the rise of a Middle Class, and the dissemination of a public opinion abroad, through the various ranks of the community.

This again gives to the reign of Elizabeth a dignified pre-eminence over all the preceding reigns of English story. Great and manifold were the benefits resulting from the long peace of Henry VII., but there was a still more important idea marking the progress of society ; this was the destruction of the old class of feudal nobles, who had been as terrible to the king almost, as they had been to the people. The great policy of all the three really reigning Tudors, Henry VII., and Henry VIII., and Elizabeth, had been to subvert their power. Henry VII., in order to secure to himself and his descendants undisturbed possession of the throne, and to avoid internal dissensions, resolved to lessen their influence and curb their power, which was to be done most effectually by permitting those so inclined to alienate their property. To bring this about, however, it was necessary to alter the law of entails, or to lessen its force. This was no easy matter, as the barons who were aware of the chance of civil wars, and of the risk thereby incurred of losing their estates, always as a body felt partial to the law of entails ; and if a legislative enactment to that effect had been proposed, might have opposed it, or at least might have suspected the motive of the monarch in such an attempt,

which would have proved a bar to his plans. To aid this plan the courts of law lent their assistance, and by their connivance, the fiction was adopted of levying fines and suffering recoveries for the purpose of cutting off the farther extension of the entail : then the proprietors of estates found themselves relieved from the operation of the law, and soon availed themselves of the power lately acquired of alienating their property. At this time the estates of the barons were in general larger than at any subsequent period, but by this means, their wealth and estates decreased, while a powerful middle class was forming beneath them, and trade already was beginning to walk in the dress of departed feudalism. Thus, by imperceptible degrees, property was changing hands ; and, consequently, this new order of society began to make its appearance. Industry and labour were especially promoted by the spread of Protestantism. It is strange, but true ; we state a fact, merely ; we do not trace a cause. Sterility and barrenness are the invariable attendants of Romanism, but the publication of the doctrines of the Reformation in England, expanded the genius of the people, kindled new life and enterprise in their bosoms. Labour expands thought as well as muscle ; the middle

class was not immediately formed : time was required, and even at the close of the reign of Elizabeth it was but a small body, but there *was* the body and a strong and influential one ; and Elizabeth knew of its existence—an existence that had never been dreamt of by the haughty Henries while they were scheming to subdue their barons. The more terrible shadow of popular power had not been noticed falling across the throne, but Elizabeth was brought immediately into contact with the new power, and it appeared to be always her boast to place herself at the head of the people. “ Her subjects she would have to be her children ; her kingdom was her palace.” Her progresses to the mansions of her most distinguished nobles were all, doubtless, made with the design of humbling them by extravagant outlays. The sums that many of her entertainments cost were ruinous. Elizabeth affected the arts of popularity ; indeed, she had them, she was wont to mix with the people ; she made their amusements hers ; she adhered to their prejudices ; she gossipped with them ; she joked with them ; she swore with them ; she dandled them on the knee ; but she never flattered their aspiring tendencies. She patted aldermen and mayors on the head. We hear

nothing of favour shown to Spenser, Shakspear, or Jonson. What chronicle records to us her cultivation of literature? Who tells us of the smiles bestowed on the noble minds with which her country abounded? No! the queen did nothing to promote the intelligence of the people. No doubt she dreaded that intelligence, but it was spreading. John Forster, in his "Essay on the Popular Progress," most eloquently remarks,—“But the people, in her despite, had their Spensers and their Shakspears; they had their translation of the Bible, with its lessons of brotherhood and charity; they had their tales of the new world, their lessons from the old; they had as free an access to the great literature of the ancient writers, as to that of the living and surpassing genius which surrounded them; they had poetry in thought, and poetry in action; adventure and chivalry moved in living realities through the land; and the commonest people might lift their caps, as they passed along the streets, to a Drake, a Sydney, or a Raleigh. It was only necessary that the rising influences, which marked the accession of the Tudor family, should thus appear in full and active operation on the minds of the English people, to sentence to a gradual but certain downfall, the

half-political, half-patriarchal system of the famous woman, by far the greatest of the race.”*

Until the reign of Elizabeth, and during the greater part of her reign, parties in England were unknown ; there had been no soil in which they could grow. The great actors upon the political theatre had their adherents and well-wishers, though these were confined to the high circles of life : but where there was no opinion there could be no party. But towards the close of this reign men began to arrange themselves in groups, and beneath various banners. The remarks of Dr. Arnold are both eloquent and pertinent upon this. “The language of the Roman Catholics did not mislead the mass of the English nation, but only made themselves more odious. The serpent’s wisdom of Elizabeth cannot be denied by the bitterest of her enemies. With incomparable abilities, she made herself personally the darling of her people, from the first year of her reign to the last. Her behaviour when she passed through the city in state, on the day preceding her coronation, or, when thirty years afterwards, she visited and harangued her troops at Tilbury,—or when, at the very end of her reign, she

* Forster’s ‘Statesmen of the Commonwealth,’ Vol. i., lviii.

granted so gracefully the petition of the House of Commons against monopolies, was all of the same character ; the frank, and gracious, and noble bearing of a sovereign feeling herself at once beloved and respected, knowing the greatness of her place, and sincerely, if not habitually, appreciating its duties. Her personal qualities made her dear to her subjects, and assisted them in seeing clearly that her cause and theirs were one. Conspiracy at home, and open war abroad, the excommunications of Rome, the Armadas of Spain, the Assassination plots of the Catholics, only bound her people's love to her more firmly. Her arbitrary acts, and still more arbitrary language—the severities, illegalities, and cruelties of her government towards the parties who opposed her, the people at large forgot or approved of. Nothing was unjust, nothing was cruel, against the enemies of one whom the people so loved. The almost universal voice of England called for the death of Mary Stuart, because the people believed her life to be incompatible with the safety of their beloved queen. Whilst Elizabeth lived, political parties, properly so called, were incapable of existing : it was the whole English nation on one side, and on the other a few conspirators. But another scene was preparing ; and

when her successor came to the throne, the state of parties assumed a different aspect : and political elements were added to the religious, rivalling or surpassing them in the interest which they awakened.”*

But it ought never to be forgotten that the reign of Elizabeth was marked by terrible severities towards the Puritan party. We have already intimated that she was a sorry Protestant.—Early in the course of her reign two Baptists were burned in Smithfield, and shortly after Hammond was burned as an obstinate heretic, in a ditch, in Norwich. John Stubbs, for writing against the queen’s marriage with the Duke of Anjou, lost his hand. But his work principally bore upon the dangers to be apprehended from the union, to the Protestant religion : but when the act of Conformity was passed, by which all persons were called upon, once a month, at least, to repair to the Established Church, sixty-one clergymen, forty-seven laymen, and two gentlemen, suffered death on the scaffold : but this was only a small part of the persecution. Immense portions of property were confiscated ; the gaols were crowded ; in Hampshire four hundred recusants were prose-

* Arnold’s Lectures on History.

cuted, and in Lancashire six hundred. Many of them suffered severely. They were branded, whipped; their ears were bored with red-hot iron. Thus did the real martyrs for liberty of conscience take up the cross, and boldly battle for the right.

Amidst the encomiastic flourishes about these golden times, these facts should not be forgotten. The Puritans of that day were the true Reformers; in their ranks were even then found learning, wisdom, and eminent piety.—The more brilliant achievements of the time has shaded their quiet doings; but they, from scaffold and gallows, from pillory, whipping-post, and branding-iron, were preaching sermons, which were to call forth a powerful response at no distant period of time.

CHAPTER III.

THE ARMADA.

THE King of Spain at last aroused himself to repel the attacks made upon his honour by great counter-attack. England had made him appear contemptible throughout the world ; his fairest towns had been pillaged and burnt ; his ships of treasure had been continually intercepted ; his revolting subjects in the Netherlands had been aided in throwing off their allegiance ; and so, with resolution and courage, he prepared for a great aggression on England, and the preparations were on a scale sufficient to alarm any land, and to crush anywhere the strongest alliance which was not placed upon the moral bravery and heroism of the people. But the spirit of the people rose with the imminence of the danger and the emergency ; and it was on the individual and spontaneous energy of the country that its whole safety depended,



and every person in the realm roused to enthusiasm to meet the impudent invaders. All ranks vied with each other ; the rich and noble poured their offerings of wealth ; the youthful chivalry of the land bestirred itself, and rushed on board vessels of its own equipment. The poor demanded arms, so that they might stand ready to meet the invaders when they came ; the Papists resounded with loud animating outcries against Pope and Spaniard. Elizabeth, casting aside all her weaknesses, showed herself to be worthy of such a people, as the people were worthy of such a heroine. England was not then, as now, prepared for any such attack, and her foes, doubtless, calculated upon her weakness. The best troops of this country were, at this time, absent in Flanders ; the royal navy was extremely small ; there was no standing army ; a few guards surrounded the queen, and a few forts were garrisoned on the Scottish border. But the revenues of the government were not at all equal to the contest ; not a single ally upon the continent capable of rendering any assistance. The fidelity of Scotland was doubted ; the fidelity of the queen's Catholic subjects was doubted. Never did the country seem placed in an emergency so fearful. An appeal was made to the patriotism of the

people, and the reply was prompt and glorious. A message was sent by the privy council to inquire of the Corporation of London what the city would be willing to undertake for the public service. The Corporation requested to know what the Council might judge requisite in such a case. Fifteen ships and five thousand men was the answer.

Two days after, the city humbly entreated the Council, in sign of their perfect love and loyalty to prince and country, to accept ten thousand men, and thirty ships, amply furnished. And, adds the chronicler, "even as London like gave precedent, the whole kingdom kept true rank and equipage." At this time the able-bodied men in the capital, between the ages of eighteen and sixty, amounted to no more than 17,083.

There were not wanting to the queen's council some who proposed shocking and horrible methods of attempted defence—no other than to take away the lives of the leading Catholics of the realm; but Elizabeth rejected with horror these suggestions of cowardice and cruelty; at the same time all proper means were taken to provide against the possibility of their using their freedom to the detriment of the nation. But this lenient mode of procedure

met with its reward ; for most of the Catholics entered the ranks of the volunteers ; and the Catholic gentry encouraged their tenantry and dependents to engage in the defence of their country,—while many fitted out vessels at their own expense, and entrusted them to the command of persons on whose fidelity the queen could rely.

Five years had Philip of Spain been preparing the terrible Armada ; but it was not until 1587 that anything decisive and definite appears to have been known. Upon the death of Mary Queen of Scots he proclaimed Elizabeth a murderer, and hurried on his preparations for attack, without any attempt at concealment. Then Drake was sent to destroy all the Spanish ships he could find in the Spanish harbours, and to prevent, or at least delay, the preparations of the invading fleet.

“ With thirty sail, he swept into the Cadiz roads, burned, took, or sank thirty ships (some of the largest size), and secured a considerable quantity of spoil for the benefit of some of the merchant-adventurers with him ; then, turning back along the coast, between Cadiz Bay and Cape St. Vincent, disposed in a similar manner of nearly one hundred vessels, and demolished four castles. Drake called this ‘singeing the

King of Spain's beard.' Sailing to the Tagus, he then challenged the Marquis Santa Cruz, who was the appointed general of the Spanish Armada, and captured before his eyes the *St. Philip*, a great ship loaded with the richest merchandize. De Cruz, the best sailor of Spain, forbidden by the orders he had received from the Court of Madrid to accept Drake's challenge, though his was the superior force, took it so much to heart, that it is said he fell sick in consequence, and soon after died. These brilliant performances of Drake proved of sufficient consequence to delay the sailing of the Armada more than a year."

At last the King of Spain completed his preparations, and raised his terrible armament for the conquest of the little island of Britain: it consisted of ninety-two galleons, or ships of the line, four galliasses, thirty frigates, thirty transports for horse, and four gallies,—on board whereof were 8350 mariners, 2080 galley slaves, and 19,290 land forces; the whole commanded by the Duke of Medina Sidonia: besides which, the Prince of Parma, the Spanish general in Flanders, was ordered to prepare transports and flat-bottomed boats to transport an army of horse and foot from the Netherlands to England. At the same time,

Pope Sixtus V. published a crusade against Elizabeth, declaring her dethroned, and her subjects absolved from their allegiance,—also granting indulgence to all who should assist in dethroning this heretical queen. Moved by this last clause in the bull of excommunication, many noblemen, from the various kingdoms of the Continent, enlisted themselves in the Spanish service.

In England all people were astir; it is supposed that about this time “King John” was produced by Shakspeare, if so, how the theatre must have rung with plaudits when passages like the following were uttered?

“This England never did, and never shall,
Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,
But when it first did help to wound itself:
Now, these her princes are come home again,
Come the three corners of the world in arms,
And we shall shock them: nought shall make us rue,
If England to herself do rest but true.”

The command of the forces was placed in the hands of the men best qualified to serve their country in such circumstances; Lord Howard, a catholic, was appointed Lord High Admiral; and the intrepid Drake, vice-admiral; while Frobisher and Hawkins were appointed to chief offices. Sir Walter Raleigh was elevated to

the command of the land forces ; and, although subsequent historians have severely condemned the apparent blindness which could place so inefficient a soldier, and so bad a man as Leicester, as generalissimo of the whole array, it must be remembered, that, while it shows in our virgin queen a character weak enough, the post itself was more ostensibly than really magnificent ; the other brave officers were filling posts of dangerous duty, while his, nominally so great, led to the exertion of no power, and entailed but little responsibility. Howard, the lord high admiral, appears never to have been at sea but once before, and he was, therefore, an untried man ; but he exhibited all the traits of greatness, courage, resolution, and conduct ; endeared himself by his affability to the sailors, and to the officers by docility to their counsels. He showed his alacrity in the service by putting his hand to the rope which was to tow his ship out of harbour ; and he showed his patriotism by his opposition to her majesty's orders, when, in her excessive economy upon the first dispersion of the Armada by a storm, she commanded four of the largest ships to be laid up : he earnestly requested that he might be permitted to retain them at his own expense, rather than the safety of the country should be risked

by their dismissal. He was accompanied by two of the greatest navigators of the age ; Hawkins, who was chiefly relied on for the conduct of the main fleet, and who was knighted by the lord high admiral on board his own ship, immediately after the action ; with Frobisher, another equally eminent navigator, who led into action the "Triumph," one of the three first rates which were then all that the English navy could boast. To the heroic Drake a separate squadron was entrusted, and it was by this division that the principal execution was done upon the Armada, as it fled in confusion before the valour of the English, and the fury of their tempestuous seas. An enormous galleon surrendered, without firing a shot, to the much smaller vessel of Drake, purely from the terror of his name. Tilbury Fort, opposite Gravesend, will ever be associated with Elizabeth ; it was the head quarters of the camp, and she went thither to review her troops ; the day was cheerful, the soldiers looked cheerful. The queen in her armour, mounted on her war-horse, with her truncheon in her hand, shines and moves before us, aged as she now was, like a very heroine, and her words were well calculated to stir confidence in the minds of the listeners.

" We have been persuaded by some that are

careful of our safety, to take heed how we commit ourselves to armed multitudes, for fear of treachery ; but I assure you, I do not desire to live to distrust my faithful and loving people. Let tyrants fear ! I have always so behaved myself, that, under God, I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and good will of my subjects ; and, therefore, I am come amongst you at this time, not as for my recreations and sport, but being resolved in the midst and heat of the battle, to live or die amongst you all—to lay down for my God, for my kingdom, and for my people, my honour, and my blood, even in the dust. I know that I have but the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart of a king, and of a King of England too ! and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain, or any prince of Europe, should dare to invade the borders of my realms ! To which, rather than any dishonour shall grow by me, I myself will take up arms—I myself will be your general—the judge and rewarder of every one of your virtues in the field. I know already by your forwardness, that you have deserved rewards and crowns, and we do assure you, on the word of a prince, they shall be duly paid you.”

We cannot follow the events of this attempted

invasion through all their particulars. Not a single Spaniard set foot on English ground, but as a prisoner ; one English vessel, and that only of the smaller size, became the property of the invaders ; about half of the vaunted Invincible Armada returned in safety to the ports of Spain.

It is impossible to obtain a more vivid idea of the enthusiasm which roused the whole heart of England during this event, than from the perusal of MR. MACAULAY'S graphic Poem, and here it is :—

“ATTEND all ye who list to hear our noble England's
praise,

I tell of the thrice-famous deeds she wrought in ancient
days,

When that great fleet invincible against her bore in vain,
The richest spoils of Mexico, the stoutest hearts of Spain.

It was about the lovely close of a warm summer day,
There came a gallant merchant ship full sail to Plymouth
Bay ;

Her crew had seen Castille's black fleet, beyond Aurigny's
isle,

At earliest twilight, on the waves lie heaving many a mile ;
At sunrise she escaped their van, by God's especial grace ;
And the tall Pinta, till the noon, had held her close in
chase.

Forthwith a guard at every gun was placed along the wall ;
The beacon blazed upon the roof of Edgumbe's lofty hall ;
Many a light fishing-bark put out to pry along the coast ;
And with loose rein and bloody spur rode inland many a
post,

With his white hair unbonnetted the stout old sheriff
comes ;

Behind him march the halberdiers, before him sound the
drums ;

His yeomen, round the market-cross, make clear an ample
space,

For there behoves him to set up the standard of her Grace.
And haughtily the trumpets peal, and gaily dance the
bells,

As slow upon the labouring wind the royal blazon swells.
Look how the lion of the sea lifts up his ancient crown,
And underneath his deadly paw treads the gay lilies down.
So stalked he when he turned to flight, on that famed
Picard field,

Bohemia's plume, and Genoa's bow, and Cæsar's eagle
shield :

So glared he when at Agincourt in wrath he turned to bay,
And crushed and torn beneath his claws the princely
hunters lay.

Ho ! strike the flag-staff deep, sir knight : ho ! scatter
flowers, fair maids :

Ho ! gunners fire a loud salute : ho ! gallants, draw your
blades :

Thou sun, shine on her joyously—ye breezes waft her
wide ;

Our Glorious SEMPER PARVUM—the banner of our pride.

The freshening breeze of eve unfurled that banner's
massy fold,

The parting gleam of sunshine kissed that haughty scroll
of gold ;

Night sank upon the dusky beach, and on the purple sea,—
Such night in England ne'er had been, nor e'er again
shall be.

From Eddystone to Berwick bounds, from Lynn to Mil-
ford Bay,

That time of slumber was as bright and busy as the day ;

For swift to east and swift to west the warning radiance
spread ;
High on St. Michael's Mount it shone—it shone on Beachy
Head.
Far on the deep the Spaniard saw, along each southern
shire,
Cape beyond cape, in endless range, those twinkling
points of fire ;
The fisher left his skiff to rock on Tamar's glittering
waves,
The rugged miners poured to war from Mendip's sunless
caves.
O'er Longleat's towers, o'er Cranbourne's oaks, the fiery
herald flew ;
He roused the shepherds of Stonehenge, the rangers of
Beaulieu.
Right sharp and quick the bells all night rang out from
Bristol town,
And ere the day three hundred horse had met on Clifton
Down ;
The sentinel on Whitehall Gate looked forth into the
night,
And saw o'erhanging Richmond Hill the streak of blood-
red light.
Then bugle's note and cannon's roar the death-like silence
broke,
And with one start, and with one cry, the royal city woke.
At once on all her stately gates arose the answering fires ;
At once the wild alarm clashed from all her reeling
spires ;
From all the batteries of the Tower pealed loud the voice
of fear ;
And all the thousand masts of Thames sent back a louder
cheer :

And from the farthest wards was heard the rush of hurrying feet,
And the broad streams of flags and pikes dashed down each roaring street :
And broader still became the blaze, and louder still the din,
As fast from every village round the horse came spurring in :
And eastward straight, from wild Blackheath, the warlike errand went,
And roused in many an ancient hall the gallant 'squires of Kent.
Southward from Surrey's pleasant hills flew those bright couriers forth ;
High on bleak Hampstead's swarthy moor they started for the north ;
And on, and on, without a pause, untired they bounded still,
All night from tower to tower they sprang—they sprang from hill to hill,
Till the proud Peak unfurled the flag o'er Darwin's rocky dales—
Till like volcanoes flared to heaven the stormy hills of Wales—
Till twelve fair counties saw the blaze on Malvern's lonely height—
Till streamed in crimson on the wind the Wrekin's crest of light—
Till broad and fierce the star came forth on Ely's stately fane,
And tower and hamlet rose in arms c'er all the boundless plain ;
Till Belvoir's lordly terraces the sign to Lincoln sent,
And Lincoln sped the message on o'er the wide vale of Trent ;

Till Skiddaw saw the fire that burned on Gaunt's embattled pile,
And the red glare on Skiddaw roused the burghers of Carlisle."

The poem has caught the fact as well as the graphic spirit of History. It is well known that the Victors of Waterloo received their first summons to battle in the ball-room. We have a parallel in the incident that occurred to the Vice Admiral Drake and his officers, who were playing at bowls on the Plymouth Hoe, when one Fleming, a Scottish privateer, brought the intelligence that he had seen the Spanish fleet off the Lizard. The cool self-possession of Drake, at that exciting moment, was never surpassed. Amidst the sudden bustle and calls for the ships' boats, he insisted the game should be played out; there was plenty of time, he said, to win the game, and beat the Spaniards. The wind was blowing hard when the two admirals sailed out of Plymouth harbour, and on the following Saturday, July 20th, 1588, the Armada was seen—a terrible spectacle approaching majestically the devoted British shores. It appeared a close crescent *seven miles broad*, while the ships appeared like floating castles. How the proud Spaniards must have *vaunted* as they beheld the English ships, like

a number of little cockle boats approaching them. Their castles were useless; Sir Henry Wotton compared the battle to a morris dance upon the waters. The lythe and active little Englishmen danced round the vast Spanish ships, and poured their fire upon them in all directions. Invincible after Invincible was crippled, and one ship, taken by Drake, was found to contain 55,000 ducats, which he instantly distributed amongst his sailors. On the 27th, in the dead of the night, Lord Howard sent a number of fire ships, filled with combustibles, pitch, sulphur, rosin, wild-fire, and entirely broke the order of the Spanish line. The ships, in their hurry to escape, ran against each other; some were burnt, sunk, destroyed; they were scattered all about; some far out, unprotected on the wide sea. God fought for Britain then, scattering her enemies by His fearful breath of storm and tempest. And how joyously would the heart of the nation beat upon the certain news of the dispersion of the foes! Not nearly the number of ships would have escaped, but for the parsimonious policy, by which the commanders were compelled to fall short in their work of conquest from want of powder.

“The defeat of the Armada was, of course,

felt to be a great national deliverance, and celebrated with deep and universal joy. Passing over the great fires at Southwark, the demonstrations of victory displayed at London Bridge, and the first general but irregular exhibition of religious thankfulness, bursting out also into song and music that are still preserved, the 19th and 24th of November were especially set apart, the first as a holy day to be observed by all people throughout the realm ; the latter, as the day on which the queen would make her own public acknowledgments. Her love for her country and her people, her pride in their fame, her sleepless anxiety for their prosperity, can never be denied, whatever else may be said in disparagement of her ; and we cannot but think, that it was not merely joy for the security of her crown that glowed in that mighty heart, when, after issuing from Whitehall Palace, and riding in her chariot through the crowded streets ; with her train of heroes and statesmen, Queen Elizabeth knelt down at the west door of St. Paul's, and openly and audibly praised God, "who had thus delivered the land from the rage of the enemy." Nor was this the only evidence of feeling too powerful to be restrained within formal limits, with which Elizabeth surprised the noble assembly on that occasion.

After a sermon, "wherein none other argument was handled, but only of praises and glory to be rendered unto God," she broke forth again with a full heart, exhorting all the people to thankfulness, "with most princely and Christian speeches." When we read of such scenes, it is not difficult to understand how Elizabeth won the name of "Good Queen Bess," or why her name is still traced as it were in golden characters, in the history of the English people."

CHAPTER IV.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS.

It is time that we attempt some account of the personal character of our famous queen, and we shall attempt it rather by anecdote than by dissertation ; perhaps there never was a monarch in any age of the world, whose history so abounded in contradictions and paradoxes. Burleigh summed up her character by saying that "frequently she appeared to be something more than man, and something less than woman," and perhaps, this is strictly in harmony with her own account of herself, for she claimed to belong to neither masculine, feminine, or neuter gender, but to be in herself all the three. A prime officer with a white staff coming into her presence, she willed him to bestow a place upon a person whom she named. "May it please your highness, madam," saith the Lord, "the disposal of that place pertaineth to me by virtue of the white staff." "True," said the

queen, "yet I never gave you your office, but that I still reserved myself of the *quorum*." "Of the *quorum*, madam," returned the Lord, presuming somewhat too far upon her favour. Whereat she snatched the staff in some anger out of his hand, and told him "he should acknowledge her of the *quorum*, *quorum*, *quorum*, before he had it again." They were not far from the truth who described her as an "Henry VIII., in petticoats;" there are very few traits of her character which represent her clothed in any of the gentle proprieties of womanly beauty and grace; the dignity she had was of the throne, not of the sex, and her appearance and demeanour were only not coarse, because she was a queen, and a queen cast so completely on her own resources, compelled to do battle with so many fierce and hostile influences; she would not have been a desirable wife for any of us, she would always have made herself felt most emphatically in any scene of life. She carried to the British Throne, it must be admitted, something of the valour and vehemence of those more modern ladies, whose wont it is to preside at the stalls of the great Fish Bazaar of Tower Street, London.* This is no exaggeration; she

* Lest this too classical language should seem, dark in a word, "Billingsgate."

achieved for Freedom, and for England, perhaps for Europe, a great and noble work, but she was utterly regardless of her means ; never had any woman so little of her sex. Her soul was masculine, but not like the soul of the Agrippinas and Zenobias of Rome, or of Tadmor ; they move before us queens indeed, in majesty of speech, of sentiment and action ; but Elizabeth was a wonderful compound of majesty and meanness—of courage and cowardice ; of daring and double dealing ; it is clear that she loved a plot ; to her there was a charm in the ambidexterous cunning, overweighing the fronting glory of the open soul. Elizabeth's thoughts wonderfully hovered around the altars of Matrimony ; one wonders how she contrived to escape unchained or unsinged ; unsinged, she perhaps did not escape : her character, both as princess in girlhood, and queen in womanhood, has come down to us with remarkable reports, the truth or falsehood of which must be left to the reader's own moral sense of probability. And whether the fox in this instance reviled the grapes beyond the reach, we know not ; but certain it is that she perpetually interposed her voice and power wonderfully during her whole reign, to condemn or to prevent marriage, with coarseness and pique, and sometimes with ex-



ceeding cruelty. When upon one occasion she visited the Archbishop of Canterbury, in taking leave of his wife, Mrs. Parker, she said, "Madam, I may not call you, and mistress I must not call you, but however, I thank you." Here was a piece of gratuitous impudence.

In what words can we sufficiently express reprobation of her treatment of the Lady Catharine Grey, the sister to the unfortunate Lady Jane Grey; this history is indeed a tragedy, even more terrible than that which involves the memory of the illustrious sister. She was so unfortunate as to be the successor to the throne by the Suffolk line; and when her sister was betrothed to Lord Guildford Dudley, her hand was given to Lord Herbert, but the marriage was never consummated. From this time she remained in obscurity and neglect, the two queens Mary and Elizabeth, taking no heed to her existence, until in the year, 1560, intelligence was conveyed to Elizabeth that Catharine had contracted a marriage with the Earl of Hertford, the son of the Protector Somerset. The lady was questioned, she confessed her pregnancy, declaring herself to be at the same time the lawful wife of the earl; her degree of relationship was not so near as to make a marriage without the queen's

consent illegal, but she was immediately committed prisoner to the Tower. Hertford was summoned to produce evidence of the marriage by a certain day ; but he was in France, and he found it impracticable to produce his proofs by the time specified ; and to the Tower he also was committed as the corruptor of a maiden of Royal Blood ; the lady was treated in the Tower with hardships and rigour, and the following extract from instructions forwarded to Mr. Warner, the lieutenant, sufficiently indicate her situation. " Our pleasure is that ye shall, as by our commandment, examine the Lady Catharine very straitly ; how many have been privy to the love between her and the Earl of Hertford, from the beginning, and let her certainly understand that she shall certainly have no manner of favour, except she will shew the truth. * *

Ye shall also send to Alderman Lodge secretly for St. Low, and shall put her in awe of divers matters confessed by the Lady Catharine, and so also deal with her, that she may confess to you all her knowledge in the same matters."

The child of which the Countess of Hertford was delivered soon after her committal, was regarded as illegitimate ; and she was doomed to *expiate her pretended misconduct* by a further

imprisonment during the pleasure of the queen. There was born another child, the result of stolen interviews, connived at by Warner, for which he lost his place; the earl was fined the immense sum of fifteen thousand pounds. The marriage of the unfortunate pair was fully proved, and the feelings and expressions of the people were unanimous in their favour, and it was asked generally through the country by what right her majesty dared to keep asunder those whom God had put together. The final result of all this barbarity was, that Elizabeth detained the poor Lady Catharine in prison, until her death, in January, 1567; and the earl, her husband, having added to his offences by placing, on legal record, the proofs of his children's legitimacy and his wife's purity, was kept in prison until after her death, nine whole years.

It was a dangerous thing to marry, or to contract a marriage in the neighbourhood of the court, without the queen's consent; she was even disposed to interfere, to prevent, or withhold her consent, if required for a marriage. Yet was this Royal Misanogamist a great coquette, and was ever disposed to receive the homage of young and good looking knights.—The only pathway to success at court was flat-

tery ; the polished tongue of Raleigh won for him grant after grant, and step after step of the royal favour, from that lucky moment when he threw off his cloak, and spread it before her majesty, as a carpet on which to move, saving her royal feet from disastrous contact with dirty stones and puddles. She had an eye for a graceful figure, and an ear for a flattering, even for a servile tongue. No doubt her jealousy of Mary Stuart, as her rival to the throne, was fanned and made yet more fierce, by her jealousy of the exquisite beauty of the Scottish Queen. When she was thirty-five, and Mary ten years younger, in the bright meridian of those charms which electrified the Court of Paris, and set France on fire with their report ; Elizabeth had the cool complacency to wonder which was the most beautiful. Interesting, was all that could be said of her in her most radiant days, when all the additional charm of suffering cruel injustice hung around her. Her interview with Sir James Melville, the ambassador from Mary to England, is one of the richest morsels of self-adulation to be met with on any page. Space will not allow to cite the whole of the conversation, or the various interviews, but it strikingly illustrates the *dissimulation* of Elizabeth. The passage has been



frequently cited. It is, moreover, lengthy, but we are much mistaken if the reader will not gather from it a better estimate of the personal character of Queen Bess, than almost anything else that can be cited :—

“ She took me,” he continues, “ to her own bedchamber, and opened a little cabinet, wherein were divers little pictures wrapped within paper, and their names written with her own hand upon the papers. Upon the first that she took up was written ‘ My lord’s picture.’ I held the candle, and pressed to see that picture so named ; she appeared loth to let me see it, yet my importunity prevailed for a sight thereof, and I found it to be the Earl of Leicester’s picture. I desired that I might have it to carry home to my queen, which she refused, alleging that she had but that one picture of his. I said, ‘ Your Majesty hath here the original,’ for I perceived him at the farthest part of the chamber speaking with Secretary Cecil. Then she took out the queen’s picture and kissed it, and I adventured to kiss her hand for the great love evinced therein to my mistress. She showed me also a fair ruby, as great as a tennis-ball : I desired that she would send either it or my Lord of Leicester’s picture as a token to my

queen. She said, that if the queen would follow her counsel, she would, in process of time, get all that she had ; that in the meantime she was resolved, in a token, to send her with me a fair diamond."

Growing late, she appointed eight the next morning as the time when Melville should again see her, and when she was accustomed to walk in the garden. On meeting again, they spake of the customs of foreign countries ; the buskins of the women were not forgot, and he was asked what country's weed or dress he thought most becoming gentlewomen.

" The queen said she had clothes of every sort which, every day thereafter, so long as I was there, she changed. One day she had the English weed, another the French, and another the Italian, and so forth. She asked me which of them became her best ? I answered, ' In my judgment the Italian dress,' which answer I found pleased her well, for she delighted to show her golden-coloured hair, wearing a caul and bonnet, as they do in Italy. Her hair, rather reddish than yellow, curled, in appearance, naturally. She desired to know of me what colour of hair was reputed best, and which of them two was fairest ? I answered, the fairness of them both was not their worst

faults. But she was earnest with me to declare which of them I judged fairest. I said she was the fairest queen in England, and mine in Scotland. Yet she appeared earnest. I answered, they were both the fairest ladies in their countries ; that her majesty was whiter, but my queen very lovely. She inquired which of them was of highest stature ? I said my queen. Then, saith she, 'She is too high ; for I myself am neither too high nor too low.' Then she asked what exercises she used ? I answered, that when I received my dispatch the queen was lately come from the Highland hunting ; that when her more serious affairs permitted, she was taken up with reading of histories ; that sometimes she recreated herself in playing upon the lute and virginals. She asked if she played well. I said, 'Reasonably, for a queen.' That same day, after dinner, my Lord of Hunsdon drew me to a quiet gallery, that I might hear some music ; but he said he durst not avow it, where I might hear the queen play upon the virginals.

"After I had hearkened awhile, I took hold by the tapestry that hung before the door of the chamber, and seeing her back was toward the door, I ventured within the chamber, and stood a pretty space, hearing her play excellently

well ; but she left off immediately so soon as she turned about and saw me ; she appeared to be surprised to see me, and came forward, seeming to strike me with her hand, alleging that she used not to play before men, but when she was solitary, to shun melancholy. She asked me how I came there. I answered, as I was walking with my Lord of Hundson, as we passed by the chamber-door, I heard such melody as ravished me, whereby I was drawn in ere I knew how, excusing my fault of homeliness as being brought up in the court of France, where such freedom was allowed, declaring myself willing to endure what kind of punishment her majesty should be pleased to inflict upon me for so great an offence. Then she sat down low upon a cushion, and I upon my knees by her, but with her own hand she gave me a cushion to lay under my knee, which at first I refused, but she compelled me to take it. She then called for my Lady Strafford out of the next chamber, for the queen was alone.— She inquired whether my queen or she played best. In that I found myself obliged to give her the praise. She said my French was very good, and asked if I could speak Italian, which she spoke reasonably well. I told her *majesty* I had no time to learn the lan-



guage, not having been above two months in Italy. Then she spake to me in Dutch (*German*), which was not good, and would know what kind of books I most delighted in,—whether theology, history, or love-matters. I said I liked well of all the sorts. Here I took occasion to press earnestly my dispatch. She said I was sooner weary of her company than she was of mine. I told her majesty that though I had no reason of being weary, I knew my mistress's affairs called me home. Yet I was stayed two days longer that I might see her dance, as I was afterward informed ; which being over, she inquired of me whether she or my queen danced best ? I answered, the queen danced not so high or disposedly as she did.—Then, again, she wished that she might see the queen at some convenient place of meeting. I offered to convey her secretly to Scotland, by post, clothed like a page, that, under this disguise, she might see the queen, as James V. had gone in disguise with his own ambassador, to see the Duke of Vendome's sister, who should have been his wife, telling her that her chamber might be kept in her absence as though she were sick ; that none need be privy thereto except Lady Strafford and one of the grooms of her chamber. She appeared to like that kind of

language, only answered it with a sigh, saying, 'Alas, if I might do it thus!'

Leicester was appointed to convey the ambassador from Hampton Court to London, and on the way did not scruple to ask what Melville's mistress, the Queen of Scotland, thought of him for a husband—a proposal that had originated with Elizabeth, apparently for the pleasure of seeing Leicester refuse it on her account.

Melville answered, as he had been commanded by Mary, very coldly, and Leicester then disclaimed all pretence of aiming to marry so great a queen.

We do not much wonder that Elizabeth scorned from her spiritual advisers, all grave and serious advice. When Bishop Vaughan preached before her, upon one occasion, Sir John Harrington says, "he seemed to touch upon the vanity of decking the body too finely. Her majesty told her ladies, if the bishop had more discourse on such matters, she would fit him for heaven, but he should walk thither without a staff, and leave his mantle behind him. Perchance the bishop had never sought her highness's wardrobe, or he would have chosen another text."

Of a piece, also, with this, was her anger



with Bishop Rudd. It pleased her very much, although she had borne the sceptre forty-four years, to be told that she looked very young.—The good bishop preaching before her, when she was nearly seventy years of age, desirous that she should think sometimes of mortality, took a text fitting for that purpose. The queen, as was her manner, opened the window ; but she was far from giving him any thanks or good countenance. She said he should keep his arithmetic to himself—(he had made some numerical computations with reference to the life of man)—“ But I see,” said she, “ the greatest clerks are not the wisest men ;” and went away discontented. For daring to preach this sermon, the good bishop was sentenced for a few days to be confined to his house ; though to do the queen justice, we must add, that it was not by her orders, and that when she heard of it, she instantly commanded his release.

Elizabeth saw more of her realm during her reign than any other monarch before her, or after, until the time of our own good queen : her progresses are very famous as extraordinary and ostentatious movements, and in themselves they form a history ; but they had the more important object in the mind of the queen, of humbling the pride of the barons and the lords,

and, indeed, reducing the wealth of all her more noble and magnificent subjects. She learned this lesson, and the important bearings of it, from her father; but she bettered the instruction. He, in his attempts to curb the power of the nobles, made himself universally hated; but she, it is said, made her subjects in love with ruin. It is impossible here to present any account of the royal progresses to the reader. Perhaps there were some heavy curses heaped upon her by those whom she visited.— Towns, too, felt the burden; for she would sometimes stay in a small town, like Hertford, for instance, for a fortnight, during which time the townsfolk had to bear the whole of the expenses.

It gives some idea of the roads about London, that, on one occasion, returning to the palace of St. James's, the hedges and ditches between Islington and Charing Cross had to be cut down, or filled up, to allow free way for the thousands of people who flocked out to meet and welcome her home.

It must have been a strange spectacle, too, a royal spectacle in those days,—for the recorders of the circumstances attending them have not forgotten to give us some account of a kind of *guard* placed very judiciously in the back

ground. The *Smutty* regiment, who attended the progress, and had in charge, in the carts following behind, the pots, pans, and kettles, which all had to be removed from palace to palace; to these worthies, in consequence, was given the pleasant epithet of *black-guards*, a term often used since, although its origin has been but little known;—we may also mention another more select servant, in immediate waiting on the queen, called the *Beaufeteir*; to him was given in charge the keeping of the *beaufet*, or the plate, more especially the waiting upon the queen at table; hence the origin of the English Company of *Beefeaters*. In this era of Palaces, everywhere there was the outlay of a kind of barbaric pomp: all was unfinished, but everything put on its most costly and elaborate vestments to receive the queen. The Palace of NONSUCH, of which we have only a feeble picture as a relic of all the grandeur which excited so much homage, as embodying everything rich in architecture,—but it was fantastic.

“The palace itself,” says one who saw it in its palmy days, “is so encompassed with parks full of deer, delicious gardens, groves ornamented with trellis-work, cabinets of verdure, and walks so embowered by trees, that it seems

to be a place pitched upon by Pleasure herself to dwell in along with Health." The gardens were decorated with many columns and pyramids of marble, and fountains of the most ingenious, but artificial character,—all showing alike the magnificence and taste of the founder.

In concluding these episodical notices of the private life of Elizabeth, let us look at her at home ; and through the medium of one who had the ability to describe in no ordinary manner, the remarkable scene that was opened to him—Paul Hentzner—a German, who came to England in 1598, in the suite of a young German nobleman. His work is in Latin, but has been translated by Horace Walpole. Hentzner thus describes her march, as it may be called, from the domestic apartment to the chapel of the palace at Greenwich :—

"First went gentlemen, barons, earls, knights of the garter, all richly dressed, and bare-headed ; next came the Chancellor, bearing the seals in a red silk purse, between two ; one of which carried the royal sceptre, the other the sword of state, in a red scabbard, studded with golden fleurs-de-lis, the point upwards ; next came the queen, in the sixty-fifth year of her age, we are told, *very majestic* ; her face oblong, fair but

wrinkled ; her eyes small, yet black and pleasant ; her nose a little hooked, her lips narrow, and her teeth black (a defect the English seem subject to, from their too great use of sugar) ; she had in her ears two pearls, with very rich drops ; she wore false hair, and that red ; upon her head she had a small crown, reported to be made of some of the gold of the celebrated Lunebourg table ; her bosom was uncovered, as all the English ladies have it till they marry ; and she had on a necklace of exceeding fine jewels ; her hands were small, her fingers long, and her stature neither tall nor low ; her air was stately, her manner of speaking mild and obliging. That day she was dressed in white silk, bordered with pearls of the size of beans, and over it a mantle of black silk, shot with silver threads ; her train was very long, the end of it borne by a marchioness ; instead of a chain she had an oblong collar of gold and jewels. As she went along in all this state and magnificence, she spoke very graciously, first to one, then to another, whether foreign ministers, or those who attended for different reasons, in English, French, and Italian ; for, besides being well skilled in Greek, Latin, and the languages I have mentioned, she is mistress of Spanish, Scotch, and Dutch ; *whoever speaks to her, it is*

kneeling ; now and then she raises some with her hand. While we were there, W. Slawata, a Bohemian baron, had letters to present to her ; and she, after pulling off her glove, gave him her right hand to kiss, sparkling with rings and jewels—a mark of particular favour : *wherever she turned her face, as she was going along, every body fell down on their knees.* The ladies of the court followed next to her, very handsome and well-shaped, and for the most part dressed in white. She was guarded on each side by the gentlemen-pensioners, fifty in number, with gilt battle-axes. In the ante-chapel next the hall where we were, petitions were presented to her, and she received them most graciously, which occasioned the acclamation of ‘ Long live Queen Elizabeth ! ’ She answered it with, ‘ I thank you, my good people.’ In the chapel was excellent music ; as soon as it and the service was over, which scarce exceeded half an hour, the queen returned in the same state and order, and prepared to go to dinner.” In the meantime, Hentzner had cared more to see the preparations for the dinner than to partake in the service of the chapel, so, while Elizabeth was still at prayers, he saw her table thus set out :—“ A gentleman entered the room bearing a rod, and along with him another who had a



table-cloth, which, after they had both kneeled three times with the utmost veneration, he spread upon the table, and, after kneeling again, they both retired. Then came two others, one with the rod again, the other with a salt-cellar, a plate, and bread ; when they had kneeled as the others had done, and placed what was brought upon the table, they too retired with the same ceremonies performed by the first. At last came an unmarried lady (we were told she was a countess), and along with her a married one, bearing a tasting knife ; the former was dressed in white silk, who, when she had prostrated herself three times in the most graceful manner, approached the table, and rubbed the plates with bread and salt, with as much awe as if the queen had been present ; when they had waited there a little while, the yeomen of the guards entered, bareheaded, clothed in scarlet, with a golden rose upon their backs, bringing in at each turn, a course of twenty-four dishes, served in plate, most of it gilt ; these dishes were received by a gentleman in the same order they were brought, and placed upon the table, while the lady-taster gave to each of the guard a mouthful to eat of the particular dish he had brought, for fear of any poison. During the time that this guard, which consists of the

tallest and stoutest men that can be found in all England, being carefully selected for this service, were bringing dinner, twelve trumpets and two kettle-drums made the hall ring for half an hour together. At the end of all this ceremonial a number of unmarried ladies appeared, who, with particular solemnity, lifted the meat off the table, and conveyed it into the queen's inner and most private chamber, where, after she had chosen for herself, the rest goes to the ladies of the court."

CHAPTER V.

THE MODEL STATESMAN.

CECIL LORD BURLEIGH :—England and Elizabeth were both fortunate in the possession of this most prudent minister to guide the affairs of State, and to give the benefit of his cautious counsel in a time when, of all times, such prudence and caution were necessary. He was among the first of a new order of statesmen who attempted to govern the land, by combining the royal favour with popular and commercial advancement, and in analysing the history of this period, we are at a loss whether to ascribe the dignity and greatness of England to the magnanimity and courage of the queen, or to the wisdom and economy of her adviser. Certainly he does not claim our *highest* admiration; what mere statesman can? He was no hero! He had no *penchant* for martyrdom, and so low were his convictions, so variable and

unsettled, evidently, some of his opinions, that he might have perhaps suited as a minister in our own convictionless and time-serving age. Yet this is not said with any idea of impeaching his honesty, or detracting from the real nobleness of his character; he was a pre-eminently wary man, and wary men seldom, if ever, enlist our high regards. There certainly appear, in the first years of his statesmanship, evidences of something like double dealing; he did not aspire to the eminence of a Confessor for the Protestant Faith, but he attempted to the utmost to serve those who determined to maintain their principles at the scaffold and the stake. It was at considerable hazard to himself that he opposed, with great freedom of speech, a Bill for confiscating the property of exiles for religion. To be sure, as he was known to be firmly attached to the Reformed Faith, and as he knew not at what moment he might be an exile for the sake of the Reformation, it may be thought that he could do no less. He maintained during the whole of the reign of Mary a private and most confidential correspondence with Elizabeth, and during the intervals of leisure which he enjoyed in the latter days of Mary's reign, he so classified and *arranged* his ideas of the necessities of govern-

ment, that he was enabled to present to Elizabeth a memorial of those matters which required instant attention. During the period of the comparative minority of Cecil, when he was only a junior servant of the crown, in the reign of Edward VI., he devised measures which were materially felt by the country. Through his instrumentality the privileges of the foreign merchants, settled in the Steel Yard, in London, were destroyed; and the measure, although not in harmony with our own more advanced policy, was really both in unison with justice, and tending materially to the commercial benefit of the nation. But it is impossible here to enumerate and analyse the actions of an administration of forty years. He stands in English History the first honest statesman in the Councils of the sovereign, and although he was mainly instrumental in the framing and establishment of the Church of England, he was far removed from the bigot. For Puritans and Catholics he very frequently interposed his authority or his entreaties. It must be admitted that he more frequently temporised, than violently opposed even measures of extreme severity; yet, when the impolitic practices of the proud prelates roused his indignation, he spoke plainly. Archbishop Whit-

gift having drawn up a long series of captious articles, which the clergy were either to answer to his satisfaction or to be suspended, Cecil attempted to stop his proceedings by the following letter :—

“ It may please your Grace—I am sorry to trouble you so oft as I do, but I am more troubled myself, not only with many private petitions, of sundry ministers recommended for persons of credit, and peaceable in their ministry, who are greatly troubled by your Grace, and your colleagues in commission ; but I am also daily charged by counsellors and public persons, with neglect of my duty in not staying your Grace’s vehement proceedings against ministers ; whereby Papists are greatly encouraged, and the queen’s safety endangered. I have read over your twenty-four articles, found in a Romish style, of great length and curiosity, to examine all manner of ministers in this time, without distinction of persons, to be executed *ex officio mero*. And I find them so curiously penned, so full of branches and circumstances, that I think the Inquisition of Spain used not so many questions to comprehend and trap their priests. I know you canonists can defend these with all their particles ; but, surely, under correction, this judicial and canonical sifting poor ministers, is not to edify or *reform*. And in charity, I think they ought not

to answer all these nice points, except they were notorious Papists or heretics. I write with the testimony of a good conscience. I desire the peace and unity of the Church. I favour no sensual and wilful recusant ; but I conclude according to my simple judgment, this kind of proceeding is too much savouring of the Romish Inquisition, and is a decree rather to seek for offenders than to reform any. It is not charitable to send poor ministers to your common register, to answer upon so many articles upon one instant, without a copy of the articles or their answers. I pray your Grace, bear with this one (perchance) fault, that I have willed the ministers not to answer these articles, except their consciences may suffer them."

Cecil was able to do but little to allay the fire of ecclesiastical bitterness ; he used his influence, but it was in a realm over which he could not possess so entire an authority ; but in civil matters his moderate counsels had a far more conspicuous ascendancy. A state of unbroken peace he considered to be the happiest condition of a people ; a state in which they might carry on the improvement of their circumstances by contented industry. He laboured to diffuse information among the people, to make them capable of comprehending sound reasoning on public business ; it was a maxim with him,

“that where the people are well taught, the king has ever *good* obedience of his subjects.” He considered the Church as the grand channel for the moral as well as for the religious instruction of the people ; and he earnestly laboured to fill every office with able, learned, and active teachers.

To impress these sentiments on his sovereign, as well as his political colleagues, he warned them that “where there wanted a good ministry, there were ever bad people, for they that knew not how to please God would never obey the king.” He has the credit of being a very frugal minister. He recommended and adopted a rigid economy in every part of government, without diminishing its authority. He enabled Elizabeth to conduct her royalty with less expense than any previous sovereign. She had heavy war expenses. Her father and sister left the exchequer heavily burdened with mortgages and debts ; but the wisdom of her minister enabled her to pay them all off : and this freedom from debt gave to England a splendid vantage ground among the nations.

Cecil, of course, did not escape the censure and unpopularity attaching to the parsimonious or economical man ; the idle loungers about the *court*, especially, disliked the man who so reso-

lutely voted against all grants of money to idle suitors. His peace policy was founded upon his financial economy: he had ever on his lips the salutary maxims that war is soon kindled, but peace very hardly purchased; that war is the curse, and peace the blessing of God upon the nation; and that a realm gains more by one year's peace than ten years' war. Cecil knew that the pathway to a nation's greatness lay not through the battle-field. It is noticeable that, during this period, Europe was torn with internal convulsions; while England alone enjoyed repose. Compared with the state of other lands, how great was her repose within and around from war and persecution! Other portions of this book may show that it was not entirely so, but let the age be regarded; let it be remembered that it was the age of Philip II. in Spain and the Low Countries, and of Catharine de Medicis in France; and after the slaughters of the Duke D'Alva in one, and the massacres of St. Bartholomew in the other, all must feel how happy was the position of England during the same age. On one occasion, when the question of peace and war was being debated, and the Earl of Essex de-claimed, as usual, in favour of war, Cecil indignantly exclaimed, in the midst of the

harangue, that "the speaker seemed intent on nothing but blood and slaughter." At the close of the debate, perceiving that his reasoning was of no avail against the impulses of passion, he took his pocket prayer-book, and pointed in silence to the words, "Men of blood shall not live out half their days."

Burleigh, in all his measures, attempted to promote peace on earth : he subjected himself to much unpopularity from his opposition to the Spanish war—a war which at that time seemed desirable to all the masses of the people, because it was the highway to the possession of Mexican gold ; he was frequently assailed with the shouts of the angry multitude in the streets. The clergy hated him because he curbed their persecuting spirit, and defended the Puritans from the grasp of their cruelty.—The Papists regarded him as a foe to their religion. He was incessantly defamed. Many conspiracies were formed against his life : two assassins were executed, and in their schemes the Spanish ambassador was supposed to be implicated, and was, in consequence, ordered to leave the kingdom. Meantime his influence with Elizabeth exposed him to the hatred of the courtiers. The Earl of Leicester was at the head of all the intrigues against him, an

made, on one occasion, a bold effort to accomplish his ruin. In concert with the principal courtiers, he planned that Cecil should be unexpectedly accused before the privy council, arrested without the knowledge of the queen, and instantly committed to the Tower. When thus removed from the queen's presence, it was supposed that an abundance of accusations might be procured to elicit her approval of his trial or condemnation. This plot had nearly reached its accomplishment, and Cecil was defending himself as best he could, but with very little effect, when Elizabeth, who had been privately informed of the design—probably by Cecil himself—for surely a scheme like this could not go on unknown to the clear and all-searching eye of the old statesman,) suddenly entered the room, and addressed to the astonished councillors one of those reprimands much more remarkable for their vigour than their delicacy.

It may, perhaps, be thought that the rewards of Burleigh were great for all his dangerous services rendered to the queen and the realm; but Elizabeth was a frugal pay-mistress: he was, perhaps, better rewarded, than most ministers of her reign, as his services were so much more eminent; but to his honour it must be

mentioned, that he was the first great minister of the crown who held office for any length of time, and who did not leave office amazingly in the debt of the State's exchequer. His monetary affairs, no less than his political, were regulated by the highest wisdom and justice.

Diligence, punctuality, invincible reserve, self-command, and clear and vivid penetration, these were the qualities of his mind, which made him so valuable a minister. In that age especially, the eyes of mankind were strongly dazzled by the splendour of rank ; and a statesman was more likely to promote his views by attention to the great. Yet, with Burleigh, the poor received equal measure with the wealthy, and had their suits as patiently heard, and as speedily determined. Each day, in term, it was customary to receive from fifty to sixty petitions, all of which he commonly perused and weighed in the course of the evening or night, and was prepared to return an answer next morning, on his way to Westminster Hall. As soon as the petitioner mentioned his name Burleigh found no difficulty in recollecting his business, and delivering a reply. When at length, confined to his bed by age and infirmity, and no longer able to attend at the courts, he directed that all petitions should be sent to him



under seal ; and as all were opened in the order in which they arrived, and answers immediately dictated, the lowest petitioner received his reply with the same promptitude as the highest.*

The services of Burleigh were sincerely felt by Elizabeth, and with a magnanimity not always expressed by princes, she freely acknowledged her obligations, and demonstrated her gratitude by attentions, which, from a sovereign were the most flattering of rewards ; interesting herself in his concerns, and entering into the joys and sorrows of his family : we find her at one time standing god-mother to one of his children, on another hastening to inquire after his daughter in a sudden illness. In promoting the marriage of one of his sons she also took an active part, and visited the lady in behalf of the suitor. Extremely jealous of her real authority, Elizabeth had too much sense, as well as policy, to impede her service by unmeaning forms. When the good lord treasurer, in the latter part of his life, was much afflicted with gout, the queen always made him sit down in her presence, with some obliging expression. " My lord," she would say, " we make use of you, not for your bad legs, but for your good head." When the se-

* Macdiarmid's "Lives of State-men."

verity of his illness made him unable to quit his bed, she repaired thither with her council, to enjoy the benefit of his advice; and when his illness assumed a dangerous aspect, she appeared in person amongst the anxious inquirers after his health.

When the queen was at the University of Oxford, haranguing Dr. John Reynolds, and schooling a few more of the refractory theologians, she noticed the Lord Treasurer Burleigh, who was lame, standing, when she stopped, and would not proceed till a stool was procured for him, and then "fell to it again," says the chronicle, "as if there had been no interruption." The private life of Burleigh appears to have been as beautiful as his public life was great. At a period when the poor had so few resources for their industry, and when many, willing to work, were reduced to want, a portion of his ample fortune was appropriated to relieve their necessities. His certain and regular alms amounted to £500 per year, besides further and larger disbursements on extraordinary occasions; in relieving poor prisoners, in releasing honest debtors, in the managing of certain parishes, for the use of their most destitute inhabitants. From the low state of the husbandry at that period, and the very limited inter-

course between nations, one bad season was sufficient to subject a kingdom to the miseries of famine ; corn, in certain districts, was sold at a most exorbitant price, and rendered as inaccessible to the poorer classes as if none had existed in the country. In such times of scarcity, then of frequent occurrence, and attended with consequences revolting to humanity, it was usual for Burleigh to buy up large quantities of corn, which he sold at low prices to the poor in the neighbourhood of his different seats ; and, by this well judged assistance relieved their necessities without relaxing their industry. And the piety of the statesman did shine perspicuously through the whole of his character ; it was a piety in advance of his time, in advance of most of the teachers by whom he was surrounded ; he was constant in the services and homages of piety and devotion. During the greatest pressure of public cares he regularly attended prayers every day in the queen's chapel. When his increasing infirmities prevented him from stirring abroad, he caused a cushion to be laid by his bed-side, and he knelt there at the same stated hours ; at length, when unable to kneel or endure the fatigue of reading, he caused the prayers to be read aloud to him as he lay in bed. " I will trust no man," he said, " if he

be not of sound religion, for he that is false to God can never be true to man." When the mighty preparations of the Spanish Armada were mentioned in his presence with apprehension, he replied, with firmness, "They shall do no more than God will suffer them."

An eloquent writer, in Knight's "Old England," thus sums up the character of Burleigh:—

"He had that art which should be esteemed the highest evidence of good breeding, the art of making all who sat at his table share in the general enjoyment, by drawing forth from all those qualities in which they severally shone. Fuller says of him, 'He had a pretty wit-rack in himself to make the dumb to speak, and to draw speech out of the most silent and sullen guests at his table, to show his disposition in any point he should propound.' The hospitality of Burghley House to its wealthy neighbours was not more marked than its charity to the poorer: both were luxuries as well as duties to its princely owner. Among his other high delights, was the 'pure' and 'substantial world' of books, and the garden—scarcely an inferior world to those who care to study it. The self-control and equanimity of temper which had

distinguished Cecil in the great trials of his public life, were equally exercised in those pettier vexations that often overcome the wisest when withdrawn from the influence of the public eye. And even when growing infirmities and the loss of his dearest companion for forty-five years, the estimable Mildred, his wife, rendered him occasionally irritable and capricious, it was truly affecting to behold how the venerable old man strove immediately by all the means in his power to make atonement. That was an enviable reflection to which he gave utterance when he said, 'I entertain malice against no individual whatever, and I thank God that I never retired to rest out of charity with any man.'

The time at length arrives—

“ When, like a thrice-told tale,
Long rifled life of sweets can yield no more,”—(YOUNG)

and Cecil was prepared to

“ Toss Fortune back her tinsel and her plume,
And drop this mask of flesh behind the scene.”

“ He is on his death-bed. Children—friends—domestics—admiring, reverencing, loving, lamenting—gather about him; the world grows darker and darker—the future brighter and

brighter ; and, at last—in perfect peace—Cecil expires. The voice of England's greatest statesman is heard no more. Burghley's chief glory was his integrity ; he was almost the first thoroughly *honest* minister who had kept the coffers of the state without helping himself clandestinely to some of its contents, and to whom no touch or stain of financial extortion attached, as was indubitably proved, when Elizabeth sifted his affairs so rigorously after his decease. As for his abilities to guide the nation, their best evidence was Elizabeth's deference to his judgment, and even her occasional unwilling submission to it, at those periods when she had been betrayed into a deviation from the high path which she had marked out for herself. His impartiality in dispensing patronage was equally remarkable with his fine discrimination of character : whence it seemed as if he were resolved to render England 'distinguished above all nations for the integrity of her judges, the piety of her divines, and the sagacity of her ambassadors.' To these high merits we may add another, that though to him we chiefly owe the firm and final settlement of our Reformed Church, he was so far from being a bigot, that his habit of encouraging free discussion has been especially

noticed. And, notwithstanding Cecil's participation in some of the besetting sins of the age, as political ingratitude, political intrigue, and political bending of right and justice to might and expediency, his life was on the whole a most noble one, and the termination as noble."

To all this it may be added that his last public measures were calculated to add to the dignity and glory of England. He attempted to procure a negotiation with Spain; he did conclude an advantageous treaty with Holland. He died the 4th of August, 1598, in the seventy-eighth year of his age, after having held the station of prime minister of England for the long period of forty years, and assisted in the conduct of public affairs for upwards of half a century. During the hey-day of his life, Burleigh House, one of the first noble palaces of the Elizabethan aristocracy, was frequently honoured by the presence of Elizabeth. She often went down to this favoured residence, on an occasional passing visit, but she twelve times visited his mansion in state, and on those occasions he spared no expense. Each visit beheld the magnificent park, and the costly halls, brightening with all the decorations and the allegoric phantasies of the age; and this seems

to have been, of all the places visited, her majesty's most favourite spot, as it was the home of her most favoured servant. Glancing through the History of the reign of Elizabeth, we cannot but be struck with the important suitableness of her great minister, both to herself and the emergencies and difficulties of the age. Calm, sagacious, cautious, there can be no doubt he carried to the grave secrets which the courtiers of the time would have given piles of wealth to discover. A rare combination he developed of real homely English cheerfulness, with shrewd State cunning. Reflecting now upon the policy of that time, of the queen's haughty precipitancy, of the demand for retrenchment of national expenditure; for peace, superseding the rough and reckless purposes of war; of a calm, mild, equable commercial policy, when the forces of counter cunning playing around the island from foreign realms are borne in mind; that all the princes of Europe were longing for the dismay and ruin of England; and that the most considerable were, by public daring, or by private machination, attempting it; and that Burleigh, by his keenness and caution balanced the precipitancy of the monarch. It may not be too much to say that a large share fell to his lot of the glories of *the bright days of Queen Bess.*

CHAPTER VI.

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.

THE most tragic circumstances of the reign of Elizabeth are those in which her name is associated with her cousin Mary of Scotland, the daughter of Margaret, the sister of Henry VIII. The reader will immediately see the grounds which Elizabeth had for fear ; Elizabeth was a Protestant, the daughter of a queen who also professed to be Protestant. By the Romish Church she was not only excommunicated, but she was illegitimate ; her claims to the Throne of England set aside, Mary remained the undoubted queen, and in her virtue of her claims to the throne, her son James I., succeeded Elizabeth. Very early in life Mary was married to the Dauphin of France, and on every occasion, both she and her husband took occasion to proclaim themselves sovereigns of England. Mary was eminently beautiful, emi-

nently talented, and the memory of her beauties, her talents, and her sorrows, has ever since fired young and enthusiastic hearts for her. The Historian has softened the severity of History, and Poets have delighted to linger over her name. Sir Walter Scott, Schiller, Burns, have deplored and delineated her sufferings ; nothing can be easier than for the intellect to make out a case against her, but it is wanting in moral consistency and proportion ; and Elizabeth, in every particular, shrinks into the coquette, the schemer, the traitress, almost the murderess upon the mention of the name of Mary. The husband of Mary died young, and left her a very youthful widow, and she returned to Scotland—to Scotland, but how different to “La Belle France”—the beautiful Southern France, how different to cold, dreary, bleak Scotland ; the people of France so far advanced in politeness, the people of Scotland so far behind ; the court of France so refined, so gay, and that of Scotland so coarse, so austere ; France, where all was Popish, Scotland where all were ultra Protestant. Mary returned, too, at a time when the debate between the two creeds was warm and fiery in the land. The Scottish Reformers linked themselves and their interests with Elizabeth.

James Stuart, Mary's half brother, led them on ; while against these, Mary's Scottish adherents invoked to their aid the persecuting stake, and rack, and thus endangered their own interest and that of the mistress they so dearly loved.

“ At the coming over of the widowed Mary from France, where she had dwelt since her fifth year, where she had shared in the polite education of the French king's own daughters, in one of the first convents of the kingdom, and been the idol of the whole French court and people, it is said that, as the coast of the happy land of her youth faded from her view, she continued to exclaim, “ Farewell, France ! farewell, dear France ! I shall never see thee more ! ” and her first view of Scotland only increased the poignancy of these touching regrets ; so little pains had been taken to “ cover over the nakedness and poverty of the land.” Tears sprang into her eyes when, fresh from the elegant and luxurious court of Paris, she saw the wretched ponies, with bare wooden saddles, or dirty and ragged trappings, which had been provided to carry her and her ladies from the water-side to Holyrood. And then the palace itself : how different from the palaces in which she had lived in France ! It was

dismal and small, consisting only of what is now the north wing. The state-room and the bed-chamber which were used by her yet remain with the old furniture ; and much of the needlework there is said to have been the work of her own hands. Then the melody with which they greeted her—her poor rude Scottish subjects—“ Two or three hundred violinists, *apparently amateur performers*, held a concert all night below her windows, and prevented her getting an hour’s sleep after the fatigues of the sea. Mary, though suffering under the effects of this dire serenade, received the compliment of these ‘honest men of the town of Edinburgh’ as it was intended, and even ventured to hint a wish that the concert might be repeated.”* Such graceful good humour had not been deserved, for with something worse than the bad taste that had dictated the ‘dire serenade,’ she had been ushered into Edinburgh by pageants so contrived as to cast derision on the faith to which it was known she was strongly attached. All this was but a fore-taste of the bitterness to come. She had been promised that she should exercise her own religion in her own establishment ; but John

* Sir Walter Scott.

Knox sternly declared that to import one mass into the kingdom of Scotland would be more fatal than to bring over a foreign army of ten thousand men. Thus the poor queen, who had lived hitherto in one long happy dream, had now to be awakened, as it were, by a peal of thunder, to see a long train of miseries and troubles coming on in the distance, and threatening to overwhelm her.”*

The first Sabbath at Holyrood had nearly been stained with blood, the blood of the priest who attempted to celebrate mass in the palace chapel. “Shall that idol, the mass, again have place? It shall not!” exclaimed the excited Reformers. Some shouted for the death of the priest immediately according to the law of God. Swords were drawn. Mary must have felt as if suddenly introduced into a land of savages. Knox preached before her; she was bathed in tears before his fierce rebukes. In the course of the contest the Reformers appear as the tyrants. Mary rebuked her stern teacher for his severe dealings with all who differed from him in opinions, and willed him to use more meekness in his sermons. At last she obtained permission to remain a Catholic

* Old England.

herself, provided she kept all the ceremonies of Catholicism out of public view. John Knox was a hearty, earnest man; he hated Romanism, and he had cause to hate it; he was the great preacher of the Reformation of Scotland, and that land owes much to him, but his conduct to Mary can never be defended. Never, by pope, or prelate, in the darkest period of the Dark Ages, had any crowned head been so insulted and braved as this young creature, this sensitive girl of nineteen years of age.

During her absence from Holyrood, some of the populace of London broke into her chapel, defiled the altar, and committed all kinds of indecent outrages. Mary, indignant, had two—*only*—of these rioters indicted; when Knox wrote circular letters to “the faithful,” men of the strong hand and iron heart, charging them to come up to Edinburgh, and *protect their persecuted brethren*. What was meant the faithful well knew, and so did Mary and her privy council, before whom Knox was summoned.—He appeared with defiance on his lips—with language utterly unsuited to the presence in which he stood;—yet he went forth again freely acquitted. What hope, after that, could Mary have had of living at peace in Scotland? *She* in the habit of usually designating

Mary "the Jezebel," in his sermons from the pulpit, and this before any impropriety whatever in her conduct, beyond that of being a Catholic, and fond of hunting and hawking, music and dancing, which, indeed, were all crimes in the opinions of the puritanical disciplinarians of the new faith. Knox was unsoftened, when, "with winning sweetness," Mary promised him ready access to her whenever he should desire it, and entreated him, if he found her conduct blameable, to reprehend her in private, rather than vilify her in the kirk before the people. He replied, it was her duty to go to the kirk to hear him,—not his duty to wait upon her. At another time he told her that he would submit to her even as Paul submitted to Nero; and he did not scruple to regale her ears with proofs from Scripture of the holiness of regicide, and the slaughter of Catholic priests. These are but specimens of Mary's sufferings in the days of her innocence, to which we will add another. "It is now called in question," writes Randolph to Cecil, "whether the queen, *being an idolatress*, may be obeyed in civil and political actions."

About four years after her return to Scotland, Mary married Henry Lord Darnley; and in this marriage, as in most of her attachments,

she appears to have been most unfortunate : if she tasted happiness at all, it was but for a very brief period,—for the tragedies of Chatelard and Rizzio were soon to be acted. The friendships of Mary were conceived from her French life and tastes. Chatelard was her French secretary : he exhibited to Mary a too great personal attachment, forgetting her position as a queen and a wife. His conduct, certainly, seems to have been most audacious, though no blame can be attached to Mary. The government interposed, and he was barbarously executed. He was succeeded in Mary's estimation by David Rizzio : he had been Darnley's confidant in his courtship of the queen ; and after the marriage, when he neglected and ill treated his wife, Rizzio had expostulated with him, and thus provoked his desire to be revenged. A conspiracy was therefore headed by Darnley to murder him. The conspirators broke in upon Mary's quiet, while she sat at supper "in Holyrood-house, engaged in quiet conversation with the Countess of Argyle and the governor of Holyrood, whilst Rizzio, as was his custom, sate also at supper at a side-table, when the door suddenly opened, and the king stalked in, placed himself at the back of the queen, and glared in terrible significance on the

doomed secretary. Lord Ruthven followed : he had risen from the bed of sickness to share in the bloody deed, and now appeared in complete armour, looking pale and ghastly. The other conspirators followed, also armed. Ruthven, in sepulchral accents, bade Rizzio come forth, the place where he sat in did not become him. Mary started up, and inquired of Darnley if he knew anything of this foul proceeding ; and on receiving his denial of any such knowledge, commanded Ruthven, on pain of treason, to quit her presence.

“ In the meantime Rizzio had run round to her on whom alone all his chances of life rested, and, seizing Mary’s garment, cried aloud for protection and justice. Instantly the table was overturned by Ruthven and the others—Darnley seized Mary’s arm, and Rizzio was torn away. The first to strike was George Douglas, who, pulling out the king’s own dagger, aimed so violent a blow at the unfortunate Italian, that the blade was buried up to the hilt in his body, and so left. What a scene !—the groans of the dying victim as he was dragged away into an ante-chamber, and there despatched by no less than *fifty-six* blows !—the shrieks of the female attendants !—the unutterable anguish of Mary, to see such a deed

done on such a man, and by her own husband and his associates!—the ruffian, Andrew Ker, standing with his cocked pistol before her!—and, lastly, Morton, the chancellor of Scotland, guarding the door, to prevent any assistance being rendered to Mary from without!”

Thus far Mary, if in some shades of character imprudent, is certainly beyond any positive condemnation: but the time came when she was to be charged with serious criminality.—Her connection with the Earl of Bothwell is enveloped in mystery. Her husband, Darnley, whom she had married apparently for his handsome person, was an idiotic, cold, cowardly, cruel man, utterly unworthy of the woman who had elevated him to share the honours of her throne, and the sympathies of her home. Bothwell was a bold, dark, wily man—just such a man at her court and in Scotland, as Leicester at the court of Elizabeth and in England. Several years before her marriage Mary had banished him, outlawed him, and, for words spoken in her presence, had declared that he should never again be admitted to her favour; but he watched his opportunity, and obtained access to her. To his castle of Dunbar Darnley and Mary fled after the murder of Rizzio: after this the favours conferred upon

him were beyond all mistake. Not to dwell upon the particulars too long:—In January, 1567, Bothwell was heard to say, “it was the queen’s mind that the king should be taken away.”

On the 9th of the following month, when the latter was lying ill of the small pox, in the Kirk of Field, Mary spent the evening with him; at twelve she left him, putting one of her rings on his finger, and kissing him. She had promised to attend a masque at the wedding of one of her servants; at two in the morning a loud explosion took place, the king’s lodgings were blown up, and his body was found lying under a tree, at a short distance from the ruins. Did the queen know of this while she moved through the dance, amidst the light unsuspecting hearts? Did she know of the murder, hatching and committing? Let us hope she was ignorant; beyond all doubt Bothwell was guilty, and he committed the crime in order that he might obtain possession of Mary’s hand. Little more than two months after this, as she was on her way to see her son, she was met by Bothwell and a large party; he carried her to his Castle of Dunbar. He had been heard to boast that “he would marry her, who would or who would not; yea, whether she would herself or not.”

and married they were, at the palace of Holyrood, on the 15th day of May. It is impossible to unravel these mysteries; the events themselves became pretexts for the leaders of the reform party to dethrone the queen: but there seems ground for the belief that some of the leaders of this party were the abettors of the very assassination which they now called on heaven and earth to punish. Battles were fought—by treachery and faithlessness Mary was taken prisoner—a prisoner she was led to Edinburgh—dethroned by an abdication wrung from her—she was made the subject of her own infant son James VII. of Scotland, who was crowned at Stirling, in 1567; she continued a prisoner at Lochleven.

“But Mary was as much a queen in her own estimation after her deposition as before—her spirit rose above her unparalleled misfortunes, and she received comfort from the knowledge that she had devoted friends, who would not rest until they had accomplished her escape. She was enabled to communicate with them secretly, and to concert measures. There were ambushes placed round the lake, and fleet horses provided. One morning, the queen’s laundress, coming early as usual, Mary, disguised in her dress, went out of the castle, and entered a boat

to cross the lake. One of the rowers said, merrily,—‘ Let us see what manner of dame this is,’ and attempted to pull down the muffler that covered her face ; Mary put up her hands to prevent the action, when they were perceived to be very fair and white, and their suspicions were aroused. Mary, self-possessed and courageous, then speaking to them as a queen, charged them, for their lives, to row her over to the shore ; but they took her back to her prison, promising, however, to keep her attempt secret from her keepers, which promise they seem to have violated. George Douglas was lingering at a little village, “hard at the loch side,” with Simple and Breton, two of Mary’s faithful servants, to receive her, had she landed. The fact that she had so nearly accomplished her desire, no doubt stimulated rather than depressed the mind of the queen, and it was not long before she repeated her attempt. There was then a “poor simple lad” in the castle, “Little Douglas,” a relative of the owner of the castle, and whose proceedings no one dreamed of looking after, on account of his simplicity. By Mary’s directions he was induced to steal the keys from the keeper’s chamber, in the middle of the night, and presently the queen was once more outside the castle-gates, which

were carefully locked upon the keeper by the prisoner, and the keys thrown into the loch. Then Mary hurried into a small boat with a single female attendant, and was quickly rowed across by the stout-hearted "Little Douglas," to the opposite side, where she was received with transports of joy by some of her adherents, and borne swiftly away."

After the Battle of Langside, disastrously terminating against her, she escaped to England; a headlong flight she had of sixty miles on horseback, when she halted at Dundrennan Abbey, doubtful whether to yield herself to the mercy of her subjects, to take refuge in France, (whither, unhappily, there appeared no means of going,) or finally, to throw herself upon the generosity and protection of Elizabeth. The last course was determined on, and it was fatal; it led to a long weary captivity for life, and a cruel death at the close. Elizabeth refused to see her, but offered to mediate between her and her subjects. Elizabeth, it must be remembered, desired the crown of Scotland; Mary, therefore, declined the offer: she became a prisoner, contrary to every rule of justice, to all national order and law. She desired to leave England, she implored Elizabeth to deal justly, *generously* by her; "I came," said she, "of my

own accord, let me depart again with yours : if God permit my cause to succeed, I shall be bound to you for it." Again, she says, "Good sister, be of another mind, when the heart and all shall be yours, and at your commandment. I thought to satisfy you wholly, if I might have seen you. Alas ! do not as the serpent that stoppeth his hearing, for I am no enchanter, but your sister and natural cousin."

For nineteen years Mary continued a prisoner. She was frequently removed from place to place, and many were the schemes devised by her friends for securing her escape ; they only, however, involved them in ruin, and hastened the consummation of the tragedy.—The utmost cruelty was exercised towards her. Elizabeth, who possessed no power over her by right, treated her as a subject prisoner. It was hoped that events might transpire, leading to the death of Mary ; an attempt was made to suffocate her ; orders were given, that if any noise was heard in her apartments, her life should be immediately sacrificed. Still she retained all the charm and beauty of her mind, and sorrow only lent a more pathetic beauty to her person which, however, was sadly invaded by disease. At last it was determined to put her on her trial ; but all her notes and papers

were taken from her. She had no advocate, no friend, no adviser ; with dignity she refused to submit to a trial,—she was an independent queen, and could only be tried by princes like herself. She would rather perish utterly than answer as Elizabeth's subject and a criminal. Burleigh interrupted her by saying:—"We will, nevertheless, proceed against you to-morrow as absent and contumax." "Look to your consciences !" was Mary's indignant and impetuous reply. Hatton, however, turned her mind by an attack upon her good name. She still cared for her name, and regarded her character in the eyes of the world. Slander and malignity could not wrest from her her self-respect. "If you are innocent," said Hatton, "you have nothing to fear, but by seeking to avoid a trial, you stain your reputation with an everlasting blot." She advanced to her trial, and for two days she kept at bay the hunters for her life. Of course, it was easy to foresee how a trial like this would terminate ; Mary was condemned, and the commissioners who were appointed to try her, left the Castle of Fotheringay, her prison and her Judgment Hall. What now was to be the termination ? The parliament besought the queen to condemn her victim to death. She hesitated ; it was a

bold step to take, and she knew how vain and groundless were all those pretexts upon which alone her execution could be demanded. Evidence is certain, that before signing the death-warrant, Elizabeth felt her way, and attempted private assassination; Mary feared this, and accordingly, she addressed her last letter to the harsh woman, in which she says:—

“Fearing, as I do, the secret tyranny of some persons, I beg you not to permit the sentence to be executed upon me without your knowledge; not from fear of the torment which I am ready to suffer, but on account of the reports which, in the absence of witnesses, above suspicion, might be spread respecting my death, as I know has been done in the case of others of different condition; to avoid which, I desire that my servants shall be spectators and witnesses of my death, in the faith of my Saviour, and in obedience to his Church.”

She desired permission for her servants to leave England in peace, for her body to be buried in France. Such were Mary's last requests from her cousin, implored in the name of Christ, by their mutual relationship, by the memory of their common ancestry, and by the royalty of the English Queen. The last details of the closing days and moments of Mary are

very affecting ; but all the queen shone around her then. Unfortunate to the last, it took three strokes to separate her head from her body. Yet, cruel as was her death, how noble compared with Elizabeth's ! While the Queen of Scotland advanced to her scaffold like a martyr, the Queen of England perished like a punished culprit. No pretexts, save those of relentless, cruel policy, could or can defend the death of Mary. Through all succeeding years romance and poetry have decorated her memory. The probabilities of her guilt become fewer and fewer. All readers have sympathized with her sorrows ; they have touched all tender hearts ; and stern eyes have melted and wept over them. Many blots darken the fame of Elizabeth, but none like the death of the beautiful Mary. Her beautiful and injured form seems to haunt the neighbourhood of her rival's powerful throne ; and an encomium is never passed upon her rival's reign, but the exceptive finger points to prison chambers and the bloody block of Fotheringay Castle.

CHAPTER VII.

SHIPPING AFFAIRS.

BUT what pre-eminently lends an interest, an imperishable interest to the reign of Elizabeth, is the naval achievements which, under Drake, and Frobisher, and Hawkins, were spreading the fame of England round the whole globe. The deeds of these gentlemen were not always very creditable to themselves, to their country, or to the Christianity they professed ; but they were fraught with immense consequences to the country to which they belonged ; and the impulse they gave to commerce and trade was immensely beneficial. Not that their voyagings were undertaken upon any principle of science ; many years were to elapse before the methodical navigators appeared, who would make the ocean a convenient pathway over which to travel ; but the ships, of the Age of Elizabeth, brought home enlarged views of the

world, new animals, new vegetables, natural productions and manufactured articles altogether unknown before. Potatoes, Tobacco, and somewhat later, Tea, were introduced. The results of these voyagings, the return of these bold and hardy captains, gave a new colour to the romantic features of the age. The Spaniards arrogated to themselves the sovereignty of the sea, and the sole dominion over the whole of the New World, which they called the Indies. The battle for the dominion of the waters was, therefore, fought by the representative navigators of either kingdom, and the sailors of England swept across every ocean, unlocked port after port, and turned the prows of their vessels to realms which Portuguese or Spaniard had not yet dared to attempt. Drake was the most distinguished of these rovers; he was born in Devonshire, of poor parents, and bound apprentice, like Captain Cook, at an early period to the master of a little coasting bark, when, says Fuller, "pain with patience in his youth knit the joints of his soul, and made them more solid and compact." One Sunday, in August, 1573, while all the townsfolk were in church, news was brought into Plymouth that he was returning from his voyagings in the Spanish Main; instantly the church was emptied, and

hurrying down to the harbour where the rovers were anchoring, the people received them with loud demonstrations of welcome and joy. There had never before been a voyage, sailed by an English captain, attended with such daring or enterprise ; three vessels only, and frail barks they were, but they crossed the Isthmus of Darien, and plunged into the waters of the great Pacific ; and immense were the piles of solid gold and silver which they found in the lands beyond those great deep seas ; and every inch of the vessels was crammed with things wonderful, and rich, and rare. Men, like these, after discoveries like these, were not likely to stay long at home, and Drake soon started away again on a similar voyage, secretly sanctioned by Elizabeth ; for they were but piratic expeditions against Spain, with whom Elizabeth professed to be at peace. This time Drake took five vessels, and one hundred and sixty four gentlemen of noble blood, to learn the art of navigation ; and in the course of this voyage these nobles, beneath the sanction and leadership of their captain, made Spain to feel the weight of their arm in those coasts of Spanish America ; they seized the ships of Spain ; they burned the towns of Spain ; they slaughtered the natives of Spain ; and visited

the natives of the various countries through which they passed, with the tender manifestations of the loveliness and beauty of a christian people. When landing at Port Julian, being in some difficulty as to their whereabouts, Drake and his men were exceedingly comforted "by the discovery of a gibbet, as it was a proof that Christian people had been there before them." A more terrible satire, severe, though unintentional, was never uttered against Christianity; here, too, Drake improved the discovery of the gibbet to practical advantage, by the hanging of a gentleman, called Master Doughty, under circumstances which have been described as making it an act of "foul murder." For two years and ten months were these travellers thus rambling over the earth; many an adventure, many a strange discovery was theirs. At last, after spending many months in the almost unknown south-western coast of America, after sailing right across the Indian Ocean from Java, and doubling the Cape of Good Hope, Drake once more re-appeared at Plymouth harbour, again laden with wealth. For a long time his ship was preserved as a monument of his skill and enterprise in the dock-yard of Deptford. The queen banqueted on board of it, and conferred on Drake the honour

of knighthood. It is now long since broken up, but one of its planks, converted into a chair, is judged worthy of possession by the University of Oxford.

Another distinguished navigator we have already mentioned—Cavendish, a youthful adventurer who sought to repair on the seas the losses he had sustained from a life of gaiety at court. He was the first to point out the local advantages resulting from the occupancy of St. Helena by the English.

In a letter written by him on his return, to Lord Hundson, Elizabeth's chamberlain, and favourite, he thus enumerates *his* exploits:—

“I burnt and sunk nineteen sail of ships small and great, and all the villages and towns that ever I landed at I burned and spoiled.”

Hawkins was another of these celebrated pirates; his ships were the first fitted out under the especial patronage of Elizabeth in the slave trade service.

. But the power of Spain was curtailed still more materially by its own insanity,—though every measure which seemed to interfere with its own glory added to that of England, its youthful rival. Thus to one portion and another of the land the refugees from Holland were travelling: cut off from their own nation,

and from the exercise there of their religious duties, they fled to England,—and Elizabeth had in many instances liberality and perception enough to receive and entertain them after their deserts, for they brought along with them their trades and artifices; the greater number of them at length settled at Norwich; and when the queen visited that place, the minister of the Dutch church offered to her the grateful homage of his flock, for a place of worship had been given to them, “for the performance of public service in their own tongue, according to the form they most preferred; and encouragement was held out to them to establish themselves there with the branches of manufacture they had carried on previously, to great advantage at home. This accession of skill and industry soon raised the woollen fabrics of England to a pitch of excellence unknown in former ages, and repaid with usury to this country the exercise of public hospitality.”*

All these circumstances extended the British sovereignty of the seas. Adventure was pushing its discoveries into distant seas and realms unknown and untried before: innumerable coasts were brought to light, and regions disclosed,

* Miss Atkin.

where were found products altogether unknown to the old European Continent. To all the residents of the island who heard either from near report or distant rumour of the strange old lands beyond the deep waters, a mental impulse was given, and men's ideas and thoughts expanded, and the grandeur of the achievements developed itself in the poetry, the romance, in the very follies of the time: and while these rough navigators were plunging into the silence and solitude of the vast and distant waters, carrying the crude wonders of barbaric civilization to the startled Indians of the forests of America, with all the cruelties peculiar to the age, the commercial trader and navigator was pouring into England wealth more valuable than gold. Thought was elicited; the inventive powers and prowess of man was excited; England, more than ever was placing herself upon a friendly footing with the merchants of the world;—while Spain, with transcendent folly, supposed that by wealth brought from the Americas she could make herself great without industry or labour,—training up to curse her soil, through all future years, a horde of proud, glittering idiotic grandees; and supposed that persecution alone could make a nation feared. England pursued the steadier, the surer,

the only sure path: she hailed rapturously to her coasts the refugees of religion and freedom; she bade the streamer fly to mark her approach to other climes with the friendly vessel of the merchant; sails gleamed along her coasts, her havens were crowded, foreigners thronged her exchanges, towns began to supersede in importance the cities of the previous ages,—and thus the character of the age was won, and all succeeding times have reverted with rapture to the “GOLDEN DAYS OF QUEEN BESS.”

CHAPTER VIII.

DOMESTIC LIFE IN THE GOOD OLD TIMES.

OLD HOUSES.—The fancy creeps and lingers about those places where domestic scenes and usages have held their sway, and where the memory of them still seems to impart a spell or fear, and awe, and interest, to the old timber wainscoatings, to the arras and tapestry, and to the fearful and ghostly old furniture of the mansion. It was principally during the reign of Elizabeth that a great change passed over the domestic architecture of the land, amidst all our deprecation of the tyranny of the Tudors, and their bold, and uncompromising, and frequently remorseless policy, how a glance at the old houses of this period, as compared with the preceding domestic buildings, heightens our opinion of the value of their dynasty. The structures of the early ages are all illustrative of a period of force—perhaps the true domestic building, that

is, the home—the place of the family—the rooms consecrated to the smiles and endearments of love and affection, were unknown until the reign of Elizabeth ; the castles, the strong fortified mansions of this age, instead of being merely the abodes of strength and munitions for war, bore traces of magnificence and convenience. But, who does not love to picture to his imagination, or, perhaps, to walk through, the chambers of old Elizabethian mansions, the dwellings of romance; perhaps stained with some terrible old legendary tale; with their large fire-places, their deep oriel windows, their long halls; such buildings were generally quadrangular: galleries long and echoing extended round the building, and here were suspended the antlered horns of the stag, the pendent roses, paintings and family portraits, and heraldic escutcheons; at the corner of the buildings stood the lanterned turrets, and high over all, in the centre of the building, hung the bells and the clock with its chimes: now, too, it became customary to ornament the ceiling with florid Gothic work! the windows were decorated with flowing and varied tracery, and over the whole interior of the greater rooms, there was spread the ornaments of this grotesque style of romantic architecture. The ornamental

style of architecture never finds its way to nations, especially to the houses of the people, until they have learned to dwell in safety ; this was the case with the Tudor times. The growth of commerce diffused wealth over the whole of the nation ; and at the same time the stable and settled government gave that repose and durability without which men do not build, except for the purposes of religion and war. During the reign of Henry VIII. and Mary, the smaller mansion houses of the country gentry were little better than timber cottages, thatched and covered on the outside with the coarsest clay ; but now a change was visible, and those buildings rose, so admirably described by Gray :—

“ In Britain’s isle, no matter where,
An ancient pile of building stands :
The Huntingdons and Hattons there
Employ’d the power of fairy hands.

To raise the ceiling’s fretted height,
Each pannel in achievements clothing,
Rich windows that exclude the light,
And passages that lead to nothing.

Full oft within the spacious walls,
When he had fifty winters o’er him,
My grave Lord-Keeper led the brawls ;
The seals and maces danced before him.

His bushy beard, and shoe-strings green,
His high-crown'd hat, and satin doublet,
Mov'd the stout heart of England's Queen,
Though Pope and Spaniard could not trouble it."

Instead of timber, it now became customary to erect the buildings of hard stone. "Of old time our country houses," says old Harrison, from whose gossiping narrations we derive much information, referring to the change of social usages, "instead of glass, did use much lattice, and that made either of wicker or fine rifts of oke in checkerwise. I read, also, that some in the time of the Saxons did make panes of horne, instead of glass, and fix them in wooden calms. But as horne, in windows, is now quite laid down in every place, so our lattices are also grown into less use; because glass is come to be so plentiful, and within a very little, so good and cheap, if not better than the other. The walls of our houses, on the inner sides, likewise, be either hanged with tapestry, arras-work, or painted clothes, wherein either diverse histories, or hearbes, beasts, knots, and such like are stained; or else they are seeled with oke of our own, or wainscote, brought hither out of the east countries, whereby the rooms are not a little commanded, made warm, and much more close than otherwise

they would be. As for stooves we have not hitherto used them greatly, yet do they now begin to be made in diverse houses of the gentry; likewise, in the houses of knights, gentlemen, &c. It is not geson to behold generallie their great provision of Turkie worke, pewter, brasse, fine linen, and thereto costlie cupboards of plate, worth five or six hundred, or a thousand pounds, to be deemed by estimation." The houses or cottages of the farmer were built in places abounding in wood, in a very strong and substantial manner. Of course, in the more open and campaign country they were compelled to use more flimsy materials, covering their splints with thick clay to keep out the wind. "Certes, this rude kind of building," again says Harrison, "made the Spaniards, in Queen Marie's days, to wonder, but chiefly when they saw what large diet was used in many of those so homely cottages, inso-much that one, of no small reputation amongst them, said, after this manner, 'These English,' quoth he, 'have their houses made of sticks and dirt, but they fare commonly as well as the king.' Whereby it appeareth that he liked better of our good fare in such coarse cabins, than of their own diet in their prince-like habitations and palaces."

4

Perhaps the following account of Littlecote Hall, extracted from Sir Walter Scott's notes to "Rokeby," with the terrible tragedy associated with it, will better realise the old house of the Elizabethian Era to the reader, than any thing further that can be said :—

" Littlecote-House stands in a low and lonely situation. On three sides it is surrounded by a park that spreads over the adjoining hill ; on the fourth, by meadows which are watered by the river Kennet. Close on one side of the house is a thick grove of lofty trees, along the verge of which runs one of the principal avenues to it through the park. It is an irregular building of great antiquity, and was probably erected about the time of the termination of feudal warfare, when defence came no longer to be an object in a country mansion. Many circumstances, however, in the interior of the house, seem appropriate to feudal times. The hall is very spacious, floored with stones, and lighted by large transom windows, that are clothed with casements. Its walls are hung with old military accoutrements that have long been left a prey to rust. At one end of the hall is a range of coats of mail and helmets, and there is on every side abundance of old-

fashioned pistols and guns, many of them with matchlocks. Immediately below the cornice hangs a row of leathern jerkins, made in the form of a shirt, supposed to have been worn as armour by the vassals. A large oak table, reaching nearly from one end of the hall to the other, might have feasted the whole neighbourhood, and an appendage to one end of it made it answer at other times for the old game of shuffle-board. The rest of the furniture is in a suitable style, particularly an arm-chair of cumbersome workmanship, constructed of wood, curiously turned, with a high back and triangular seat, said to have been used by Judge Popham in the reign of Elizabeth. The entrance into the hall is at one end, by a low door, communicating with a passage that leads from the outer door in the front of the house to a quadrangle* within ; at the other, it opens upon a gloomy staircase, by which you ascend to the first floor ; and, passing the doors of some bed-chambers, enter a new gallery, which extends along the back front of the house from one end to the other of it, and looks upon an old garden. This gallery is hung with portraits, chiefly in the

* I think there is a chapel on one side of it, but am not quite sure.

Spanish dresses of the sixteenth century. In one of the bed-chambers, which you pass in going towards the gallery, is a bedstead with blue furniture, which time has now made dingy and threadbare, and in the bottom of one of the bed-curtains you are shown a place where a small piece has been cut out and sewn in again, —a circumstance which serves to identify the scene of the following story :—

“ It was on a dark rainy right in the month of November, that an old midwife sat musing by her cottage fire-side, when on a sudden she was startled by a loud knocking at the door. On opening it she found a horseman, who told her that her assistance was required immediately by a person of rank, and that she should be handsomely rewarded ; but that there were reasons for keeping the affair a strict secret, and therefore she must submit to be blindfolded, and to be conducted in that condition to the bed-chamber of the lady. With some hesitation the midwife consented : the horseman bound her eyes, and placed her on a pillion behind him. After proceeding in silence for many miles through rough and dirty lanes, they stopped, and the midwife was led into a house, which, *from the length of her walk through the apart-*

ments, as well as the sounds about her, she discovered to be the seat of wealth and power. When the bandage was removed from her eyes, she found herself in a bed-chamber, in which were the lady on whose account she had been sent for, and a man of a haughty and ferocious aspect. The lady was delivered of a fine boy. Immediately the man commanded the midwife to give him the child ; and, catching it from her, he hurried across the room, and threw it on the back of the fire, that was blazing in the chimney. The child, however, was strong, and by its struggles rolled itself upon the hearth, when the ruffian again seized it with fury, and, in spite of the intercession of the midwife and the more piteous entreaties of the mother, thrust it under the grate ; and, raking the live coals upon it, soon put an end to its life. The midwife, after spending some time in affording all the relief in her power to the wretched mother, was told that she must be gone. Her former conductor appeared, who again bound her eyes, and conveyed her behind him to her own home : he then paid her handsomely, and departed. The midwife was strongly agitated by the horrors of the preceding night, and she immediately made a deposition of the facts before a magistrate. Two circumstances afforded hopes of

detecting the house in which the crime had been committed ; one was, that the midwife, as she sat by the bed-side, had, with a view to discover the place, cut out a piece of the bed-curtain, and sewn it in again ; the other was, that as she had descended the staircase she had counted the steps. Some suspicion fell upon one Darrell, at that time the proprietor of Littlecote-House, and the domain around it. The house was examined, and identified by the midwife, and Darrell was tried at Salisbury for the murder. By corrupting his judge he escaped the sentence of the law ; but broke his neck by a fall from his horse in hunting, in a few months after. The place where this happened is still known by the name of Darrell's style,—a spot to be dreaded by the peasant whom the shades of evening have overtaken on his way.

“ Littlecote-House is two miles from Hungerford, in Berkshire, through which the Bath road passes. The fact occurred in the reign of Elizabeth. All the important circumstances I have given exactly as they are told in the country ; some trifles only are added, either to render the whole connected or to increase the impression.”

And if now from the traditional or external

appearance of the old house, we could step within to notice THE FURNITURE AND THE DOMESTIC ARRANGEMENTS, should we not be surprised? Surprised to find even in the apartments of royalty, the absence of some of those articles which seem to be most essential, even to the comfort of a very humble tradesman. All the rooms were carpetless, although they were brightly polished and covered with rushes in the higher halls, they would now present a cold appearance by our warm and well covered floors; those floors in the lower houses and in inns were frequently so far from being polished, that they presented an appearance of extreme filth, and in fact proved the harbouring places of all noisome smells, and things, frequently of diseases too. Glass, as we have seen above, in the reign of Elizabeth, was certainly known; it had been known in England seven hundred years before, but its use was confined to cathedrals and churches, and for household purposes; it was rare even in the reign of Henry VIII. Windows were, in the reign of Elizabeth, a piece of moveable furniture, and were sold at a very high price. When the Earl of Northumberland, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, left Alnwick Castle, the windows were taken out of their frames, and placed carefully by. Chimneys

now began to be generally known ; until this reign, the greater part of the houses, even in considerable towns, had no chimneys, the fire was in the middle of the house, and the smoke found its way out through the roof, the door or the windows. Chafing dishes were in general use, or the hole wherein the fire was made, was covered with iron before the family retired to rest. We speak much about the firesides of our forefathers, but the fireplace did not become generally known until the reign of Elizabeth ; all such ideas therefore must be confined to a period not much beyond three centuries : even so late as the reign of Henry VIII., no fire was allowed to the University of Oxford, and after supping at eight o'clock the students went to their books till nine in winter, and then took a run for half an hour to warm themselves, previously to going to bed. Harrison, who wrote in this reign, and whom we have so repeatedly quoted says, " There are old men, dwelling in the village where I remayne, who have noted three things to be marvelously altered in Englande, within their sound remembrance. One is the multitude of chimneys lately erected ; whereas, in their younger dayes, there was not above two or three, if so many, in *most* uplandish towns of the realm (the religious

houses, and manor-places of the lords, always excepted, and peradventure some great personages;) but each made his fire against a *reredosse* in the hall, where he dined and dressed his meat."

We must not forget the SUPERSTITIONS of these times, for they will lead us the better to form an opinion of the people. It was the age of credulity; and over the whole land, and in every house, there were persons devoutly disposed to believe everything, however ridiculous and strange, however opposed to common sense, and the most obvious convictions of men. The towns of that day were very small. London was, indeed, the metropolis of wealth, learning, and fashion. There were but very few cities of any trading or commercial importance; and the villages and houses lay scattered at very distant intervals over the land. Remoteness of neighbourhood from man, wonderfully generates the spirit of wonder and of superstition. The inn of that day was a rare house, and not much frequented by the neighbours; but the farm-house, the fireside in the old hall—these places resounded with many a wild song; and as night stole round, the household were wont to gather—not, we should fancy, round "a sea-coal fire,"—but round the

bright, sparkling embers of the old log. In lone country places, on a winter's night, it was part of the witchery of those old times to sit and tell the stories of apparitions and ghosts.—Almost every auditor could recount some tale well attested, well listened to, and entirely believed, of spiritual appearances in the shape of cow, dog, horse or cat; sometimes the real “auld Clootie” himself had been seen, cloven foot and all. At that time to doubt upon venerable and received doctrines like these was to be reputed an Atheist at once. There was not a churchyard that was not haunted; every common and heath had its fairy circle; every shepherd had seen a spirit; every old house had its one dreaded room, and each village had some solemn spot which no one would dare to pass after a certain hour. Life was embittered and surrounded with terrors. One village could not be reached from another after sunset, the room in which the head of a family had died was for a long time untenanted, especially if he had died without making a will, or if he entertained any peculiar religious opinions. But the room in which a suicide or a murder was committed was rendered for ever uninhabitable, and most probably nailed up, and the spot—the four cross-roads, where the body was interred,

or where old Dobbin, the farmer, returning drunk from the market, fell and broke his neck, was ever after frequented by a

“Beckoning ghost along the midnight shade.”

There were also ghosts of superior rank, which appeared abroad occasionally in coaches, drawn by six headless horses, with a headless coachman and postilions. “Every goblin of ignorance,” says Sir Thomas Warton, “did not vanish at the first glimmering of the morning of science. Reason suffered a few demons to linger, which she chose to retain in her service, under the guidance of Poetry. Men believed, or were willing to believe, that spirits were yet hovering around, who brought with them “airs from heaven, or blasts from hell;” that the ghost was still liberated from his prison of torment at the sound of the curfew; that fairies imprinted mysterious circles on the turf by moonlight. Much of this credulity was even consecrated by the name of science and profound speculation; and Sir Walter Scott well caught the characteristics of the age, when he said—

“When Christmas logs blaze high and wide,
Such wonders speed the festal tide;

While Curiosity and Fear,
Pleasure, and Pain, sit crouching near,—
Till Childhood's cheek no longer glows,
And village maidens lose the rose.
The thrilling interest rises higher—
The circle closes nigh and nigher;
And shuddering glance is cast behind,
While louder moans the wintry wind."

This, also, was the period when special superstitions attached to particular days and seasons. Thus it was supposed that any person fasting on Midsummer Eve, and sitting in the church porch, would see the spirits of all who were to die during that year approach and knock at the church door, precisely in the order of time in which they were doomed to depart. It is related that one of a company of thatchers, on this night, having fallen into a profound sleep, his ghost or spirit, while he lay in this state, was seen by his companions knocking at the church door.

Another superstition was, that the future husband or wife might be discovered on the Eve of St. John, or on St. Agnes' Eve, by due fasting, and by certain ceremonies. If a maiden fasting on Midsummer Eve laid a clean cloth at midnight, with bread and cheese, and ale, and sat down with the street door open, the

person whom she was fated to marry would enter the room, fill the glass, bow, and retire. The following is a receipt given by a writer in the days of Queen Bess, to maidens desirous of beholding their future bridegroom. •

“ Around the church see that you go,
With kirtle white, and girdle blue,
At midnight, thrice, and hempseed sow,
Calling upon your lover true.
Thus shalt thou say,
‘ These seeds I sow, swift let them grow,
Till he who shall my husband be
Shall follow me and mow.”

But superstition seemed most intimately bound with the observances of All Hallow Eve. This was, all over England, and Wales, and Scotland, attended with most mysterious rites and ceremonies. It was dedicated to a kind of Harvest Home Feast, but it was also supposed, that on this night a host of evil spirits, witches and warlocks, were executing their baleful errands. And then the Fairy Court, on this night held a grand procession, during which those persons who had been carried off by fairy folk might be recovered, provided the attempt were made within a year and a day from the abstraction of the person stolen.

“ It is still recorded by tradition, that the

wife of a farmer, in Lothian, having been carried off by the fairies, she, during the year of probation, repeatedly appeared on a Sunday, in the midst of her children, combing their hair. On one of these occasions she was accosted by her husband, when she related to him the unfortunate event that had separated them, instructed him by what means he might win her, and exhorted him to exert all his courage, since her temporal and eternal welfare depended on the success of the attempt. The farmer, who ardently loved his wife, set out on Hallowe'en, and in the midst of a plot of furze waited impatiently for the procession of the fairies. At the ringing of the fairy bridles, and the wild, unearthly sound which accompanied the cavalcade, his heart failed him, and he suffered the ghostly train to pass by without interruption. When the last had rode past, the whole troop vanished, with loud shouts of laughter and exultation, among which he plainly discovered the voice of his wife lamenting that he had lost her for ever."

Dr. Drake has enumerated the most usual monitions of death ; as for instance, lamentings heard in the air ; shakings and tremblings of the earth ; sudden gloom at noon-day ; the appearance of meteors ; the shooting of stars ;

eclipses of the sun and moon ; the moon of a bloody hue ; the shrieking of owls ; the croaking of ravens ; the shrilling cry of crickets ; the night-howling of dogs ; the clicking of the death-watch, the chattering of pies ; the wild neighing of horses ; their running wild and eating of each other ; the cries of fairies ; the gibbering of ghosts ; the withering of bay trees ; showers of blood ; blood dropping thrice from the nose ; horrid dreams ; demoniacal voices ; ghastly apparitions ; winding sheets ; corpse candles ; night fires ; and strange and fearful noises. These were, long as the list is, but a few of the terrors which superstition contrived to conjure up in those dark times. If space allowed, every one of these fearful images might receive some amplification and commentary ; nor are there anecdotes wanting illustrative of the potency of these various fears over the mind. But among the most terrible, and at the same time, serious evils of superstition must be mentioned witchcraft and necromancy ; the power of throwing spells and charms. During this reign lived Dr. Dee, a clergyman, to whom the queen herself was in the habit of applying to unlock to her the dark secrets of Futurity. If a gifted and sagacious queen was thus prostrate before debasing su-

perstitions, we cannot wonder that the people, generally, were so woefully blinded. The necromancers and wizards, themselves, were doubtless, generally, a designing and crafty race of men. Even old country witches were in the better sense, wiser than those who sought their advice.

"An old woman," says Scott, "that healed all diseases of cattle, for the which she never took any reward but a penny and a loaf; being seriously examined, by what words she brought these things to pass, confessed, that after she had touched the sick creature, she always departed immediately, saying—

" My loaf in my lap,
My pennie in my purse;
Thou art never the better,
And I am never the worse."

The same author mentions another instance. "So it was, that a certain Sir John, with some of his company, once went abroad a-jetting, and in a moonlight night, robbed a miller's weire, (stream) and stole all his eels. The poor miller made his mone to Sir John himself, who willed him to be quiet, for he would so curse the thief and all his confederates with bell, book, and candle, that they should have

small joy of their fish. And, therefore, the next Sunday, Sir John got him to the pulpit, with his surplice on his back, and his stole about his neck, and pronounced these words following, in the audience of the people :—

“ All you that have stolen the miller’s eels,
Laudati Dominum de Cælis,
And all you that have consented thereto,
Benedicamus Domino.”

Among the social appearances of this time must be enumerated DRESS. We will not enter upon any descriptive account of the apparel of the time ; there can be no doubt that as a whole it presented a very strange display : looking through the domestic laws and enactments of preceding reigns, we find that the monarchs of England, in their generous regard for their people, passed statutes innumerable, regulating articles of dress ; Henry VIII. passed a law limiting the use of black genet furs to the royal family, and sable furs to the nobility above the rank of a viscount ; crimson and blue velvet he forbade to any below a knight of the garter, and velvet of any colour to any not possessing estates of two hundred marks per year, or not being the heirs of such jewelry of every kind, was prohibited below a certain degree ; and the

common people were not to wear even a silver button or any kind of ornament except as a badge of service. Philip and Mary passed a law, that, "Whosoever shall wear silk, in or upon the hat, bonnet, scabbard, girdle, hose, shoes, or spur leathers, shall be three months imprisoned, and shall forfeit £10, except mayors, aldermen, &c. If any person, knowing his servant to offend, and do not put him forth of his service, within fourteen days, or do retain him again, he shall forfeit £100." But Elizabeth did not seek to prevent her subjects' passion for dress by law, and, as the land and trade generally were most prosperous, it broke forth with extraordinary vehemence. The communication of England with all parts of the continent of Europe, led to the absurd idea of adopting the various dresses of different nations. An anecdote illustrative of this fact is recorded, and which, if not true, is an epigrammatic satire upon the follies of the time : a courtier, in the reign of Elizabeth, being desirous of having correct paintings of the costume of every nation in the world, the artist was puzzled when he came to represent the English ; so he drew a naked native, with a bale of cloth at his feet on one side, and a pair of scissors on the other, and underneath the following lines inscribed :—

"I am an Englishman, and I stand here,
And I don't know what clothes to wear,
Now I will have this, now I will have that,
Now I will have I don't know what."

Elizabeth, at her death, left no less than three thousand different habits in her wardrobe, of different national costumes, and various English fashions, quite sufficient to stock any theatre; yet, her dress in all her portraits is generally the same. The most characteristic and magnificent, however, is that in which she went to return thanks for the defeat of the Spanish Armada; the magnificent ruff, rising to the ears, is the finest specimen of that superb appendage; the intertwining of pearls in the hair, the large pendent jewels on the neck, and the superlattice work of pearls over the whole dress. These evidences of magnificence are usually associated in our minds with the dress of the queen. STUBBS, of whom we shall give some account in another part of this volume, in his "*Anatomy of Abuses*, says, "There is now such a confuse mingle-mangle of apparel, and such preposterous excess thereof, as every one is permitted to flaunt it out in whatever apparel he listeth himself, or can get by any kinds of means. So that it is very hard to know who is noble, who is worshipful, who is a gentleman,

who is not ; for you shall have those which are neither of the nobility, gentility, nor yeomanry, no, nor yet magistrate or officer in the commonwealth, go daily in silks, velvets, satins, damasks, taffeties, and such like ; notwithstanding that they be both base by birth, mean by estate, and servile by calling : and this I count a great confusion and a general disorder.” No doubt many thought so too as well as Master Philip. Could any thing have induced a new statute it might have been expected then, if the extravagance was so enormous and so general as he affirms it to be. The very shirts, he declares, “ which all in a manner do wear (for if the nobility or gentry only did wear them, it were some deal more tolerable), are either of camerrick, Holland, lawn, or else of the finest cloth that may be got And these shirts (sometimes it happeneth) are wrought throughout with needlework of silk and such like, and curiously stitched with open seam, and many other knacks besides, more than I can describe, insomuch as I have heard of shirts that have cost some ten shillings, some twenty, some forty, some five pounds, some twenty nobles, and (which is horrible to hear) some ten pounds a piece ; yea, the meanest shirt that commonly is worn of any does cost a crown, or a noble, at

the least ; and yet this is scarcely thought fine enough for the simplest person that is." Yet these "goodly shirts" are nothing in comparison of a certain unmentionable garment. "It is a small matter now to bestow twenty nobles, ten pound, twenty pound, forty pound, yea a hundred pound of one pair of breeches (God be merciful to us !)." And after all he declares that the women are far worse than the men.

The fashions of those times were strange and cumbersome, but the ladies consoled themselves, and appear to have demanded from their husbands a perfect world of luxuries. In Massinger's "City Madam," the following demands might seem like mere exaggerations and fictions, if we did not follow the poetic version by the reality which will be really found to exceed it ; the lady informs her suitor of what she expects upon her becoming his wife. The passage also contains a curious allusion to the customs of the theatre :—

" My woman, sworn to my secrets, my caroch
Drawn by six Flanders mares, my coachman, grooms,
Postilion, and footmen.

" *Sir Maurice.* Is there aught else
To be demanded ?

" *Anne.* Yes, sir ; mine own doctor,
French and Italian cooks, musicians, songsters,
And a chaplain that must preach to please my fancy :

A friend at court, to place me at a masque;
The private box ta'en up at a new play,
For me and my retinue: a fresh habit
Of a fashion never seen before, to draw
The gallants' eyes, that sit on the stage, upon me;
Some decayed lady for my parasite,
To flatter me, and rail at other madams;
And there ends my ambition."

These lines, though they may look extravagant, are however paralleled by recorded facts. Soon after the marriage of Elizabeth, the rich heiress of Sir John Spencer, in 1594, a few years before the accession of James, she wrote a letter to her husband, Lord Compton, afterwards Earl of Northampton, in which she says:—"I pray and beseech you to grant to me, your most kind and loving wife, the sum of £2600., quarterly to be paid. Also I would, besides that allowance, have £600., quarterly to be paid, for the performance of charitable works; and those things I would not, neither will be, accountable for. Also, I will have three horses for my own saddle, that none shall dare lend or borrow; none lend but I, none borrow but you. Also I would have two gentlewomen, lest one should be sick, or have some other let; also, believe it, it is an undecent thing for a gentlewoman to stand mumping alone, when God hath blessed their lord and lady with a

great estate. Also when I ride a-hunting or a-hawking, or travel from one house to another, I will have them attending; so for either of these said women I must and will have for either of them a horse. Also I will have six or eight gentlemen; and I will have my two coaches, one lined with velvet to myself, with four very fine horses; and a coach for my women lined with cloth, and laced with gold, otherwise with scarlet and laced with silver, with four good horses. . . . And for myself, besides my yearly allowance, I would have twenty gowns of apparel, six of them excellent good ones, eight of them for the country, and six other of them very excellent good ones. Also I would have to put in my purse £2000. and £200., and so you to pay my debts. Also I would have £6000. to buy me jewels, and £4000. to buy me a pearl chain. Now, seeing I have been and am so reasonable unto you, I pray you do find my children apparel and their schooling, and all my servants, men and women, their wages. Also I will have all my houses furnished, and my lodging-chambers to be suited with all such furniture as is fit: as beds, stools, chairs, suitable cushions, carpets, silver warming-pans, cupboards of plate, fair hangings, and such like. So for my drawing-chambers in all

houses, I will have them delicately furnished, both with hangings, couch, canopy, glass, carpet, chairs, cushions, and all things thereunto belonging."

Another interesting circumstance connected with the domestic life of the age is the state of the Roads; the communication between the metropolis and various parts of the country, and also between town and town, in the less frequented localities of the nation. By nothing can we more certainly estimate the state of civilization than by the condition of the roads, and the accommodation afforded by wayside inns to travellers. At the time of which we are writing, almost all people, however great their degree, were compelled to jog along, by slow conveyances; there were things unwieldy and vast, complimented by the name of "Chariots," but they were usually large waggons, drawn by six or seven large, trotting horses, the chariotmen riding on a nag by the side. Inns were merry places at that time, and very important places; they are so still, but they now are found lying near together in large towns. Then, they were scattered more along the great highways, and many of them were very sumptuous; for every variety of character came thronging by; the nobleman, with his stately cavalcade,

and the country gentleman, humbler, but yet important; the rich merchant disguising his wealth, and desirous of passing for something lower than he really was, lest a telegraphic signal should convey the intelligence of his course to the "gentlemen of the road," all too plenteous in those days. Then the humbler class of characters, the good stout yeoman farmer, and the foot traveller, the pedlar and the beggar. The account given by the contemporary writers of the inns of those times is very ample and creditable; the landlord was the host, and we can very well believe that he was more given to hospitality than are modern hosts; for the refinement of manners, and more especially the aggregation of thousands of people together has a wonderful influence in destroying the ruder and the more homely virtues of the soul. One of the historians of the period says, "Every man may use his inne as his own house in England, and have for his money how great or little variety of vittels, and what other service himself shall think it expedient to call for. Our inns are also very well furnished with naperie, bedding and tapissierie, especially with naperie. Each commere is sure to lie in clean sheets, wherein no man hath been lodged since they came from the landresse, or out of

water where they were last washed. If the traveller have an horse, the bed doth cost him nothing ; but if he go on foot he is sure to pay a penie for the same, but whether he be horseman or footman, if his chamber be once appointed he may carry the kaie with him, as of his own house, so long as he lodgeth there. If he loose ought whilst he abideth in the inne, the host is bound, by a general custom, to restore the damage, so that there is no greater security anie where for travellers than in the greatest inns of England." " As soon as the passenger comes to an inne," says Fynnes Morryson, " the servants run to him, and one takes his horse and walks him till he be cold, then rubs him down and gives him meat. Another servant gives the passenger his private chamber, and kindles his fire ; the third pulls off his boots and makes them clean ; then the host or hostess visits him, and if he will eat with the host, or at a common table with the others, his meals will cost him sixpence, or in some places but fourpence ; but if he will eat in his chamber he commands what meat he will according to his appetite ; yea the kitchen is open to him to order the meat to be drest as he likes best. After having eaten what he pleases he may with credit set by a part for

the next day's breakfast. His bill will then be written for him and should he object to any charge the host is ready to alter it."

Nearly all the travelling in the reign of Elizabeth was on horseback ; occasionally a litter made its appearance containing ladies or invalids, though ladies were then usually good horsewomen. Stage coaches there were none. Coaches, at all, were very seldom seen, for they were only just introduced into the metropolis. Coaches, after the fashion of modern, and more elegant tastes, had never yet been seen in England, nor in any other region of civilization. The roads, however, were not unfrequented. Lumbering vehicles came rolling along in all the great gravity of a new and astonishing innovation. For the bishop or the lord, there were no royal roads then, and the miry way was as difficult for them as for the rest ; Macadam had not made the traveller's occupation a luxury ; an upset was frequent enough. We have many instances of the overturning of the royal caravan. Let our readers attempt, in imagination, to traverse those narrow ways looking more like by-paths, now over some desolate heath, or moor, now fronting some high and stony hill, and then by way of change, a mile or two of a dreary

slough ; no trim hedges, no hard long level roads, over which the horsemen could fly almost like spirit horses ; no turnpikes, and long, long weary miles intervening, without house or inn. Riding, then, was hard work, a sovereign cure for effeminacy and weakness ; and when, at the close of a long day's hard riding, the inn was reached, how glad was the traveller to unbend to all the genial influences around him. Perhaps in solitude, the house itself impelled the travellers to seek the common room to pass the evening in cheerfulness and good humour. News, too, was valuable then, especially to "mine host." There were no newspapers ; the first, indeed, was printed by order of Elizabeth, and called the "Gazette," to convey over the country the news respecting the Armada, but there were no newspapers ; every one, therefore, contributed his quota to the general stock, and most persons could both receive and give something in the way of passing information of value to their neighbour. In this age the blacksmith's anvil was a *rendezvous* for listeners and talkers ; the horseman, whose steed's clattering hoofs was long heard in the evening on the distant road, he would stop at that forge to try his horse's shoes and bait for half an hour, before pushing forward the remaining



weary miles ; excepting from couriers and passing travellers, from the news circulating from the travellers room in the inn, or from the blacksmith's forge, there was no opportunity to learn much of the state of the country—the monarch might die—the leading officers of the crown die, or be doomed to the block, the nation might be plunged into war ; parliaments be dissolved ; the plague might almost depopulate London, or the element of fire almost lay it in entire ruin and desolation, and months pass away before, in some villages and districts of England, any such event could be known. Perhaps in such a time the progress of Elizabeth from one part of the realm to another materially facilitated the modes of communication ; but long after her day the difficulties of travelling were great, and only with the present century have we seen the various avenues of England, the approach to every small town, village or hamlet, lined with all the evidences of civilization, and made pleasant to the pedestrian or the horseman.

It would occupy all the pages of this volume did we dare to dwell upon all the interesting details of the time—those details which would evidently show how far the present is separated from the past. *The Domestic Life of a Period*

is a very large section : men now believe that it is the most important section of History ; that every other division is valuable only as it tends to illustrate this ; and, therefore, how interesting it would be to notice the nature of laws and their administrations in those times ; --if we could walk through the various cities, and learn the occupations of the people, and the various changes to which those occupations were subjected in the course of the reign ; and then the population—to compare our densely crowded and fœtid cities with the free and ample scope allowed for the people. At the time of which we are writing, the reign of Elizabeth, about the year 1570, England contained a population of 3,737,000—about eleven persons to every hundred acres of land. “ England in that day, with all its cities and towns, and thousands of hamlets, had exactly the same proportion of population to the square mile (about seventy-four persons) as Westmorland, the most thinly-peopled of all our counties, at the present day.” At that time, too, the occupations of the people were confined to a narrowed round of employments ; how different to our present varied range, when labour is divided almost infinitely.

Perhaps, except in the wood engravings of

Brande or Bourne, there exists no monument of a very eloquent preacher of righteousness, whose voice, in that day, was heard in the streets; we mean the PILLORY, a device of somewhat oriental character, by which the people were made to be the legal inflictors of punishment; the hands and head were confined in a block of wood, and the unfortunate offender was left to the mercy of the mob, to be pelted and maltreated as they chose,—and this with a barbarous people, or people at any rate nearly so, surely was a terrible doom; it was usually the mode of punishment for giving short weight, or selling adulterated articles; fraudulent debtors, perjurers, and others were so punished,—and frequently the punishment was capital; the individual died beneath the infliction. In the reign of Elizabeth the pillory began to be used more constantly than before, as a method of punishing offences of opinion, and the victims were often received with expressions of sympathy and regard. In a later day, De Foe, who stood thus in the pillory, conferred immortality upon it by addressing a hymn to it; and although this great teacher of the Elizabethian era lasted until the early part of the nineteenth century, from that period the ancient ignominy of the pillory was *gone*.

Can the reader realise those times? The man who, in the present day, condescends to teach us the Philosophy of History, Alison, would fain draw a comparison between our age and the times of Queen Bess, to the disparagement of ours; and others have attempted to write in the same vein. Such notorious and shameless misrepresentation of truth, and perversion of all sound philosophy, can but excite pity for the narrowness of the vision. Simply, what was the condition of the land in those days—its domestic condition? The improvement upon preceding times was great—glorious to contemplate; but, as compared with our times what was the domestic condition of the land?

We are not desirous of estimating the well-being of a people by the affluence of their luxuries; not by the soft carpets which supersede the rushes spread along the floor; not by the elegant damask hangings displacing the rude and weighty arras around the chamber; not by the blaze of magnificent light casting into dimness, if not absolute gloom, the straggling tapers of the 17th century; but by the presence of law and order, and the absence of discord; by the sovereignty of the laws over the freaks of monarchs, or statesmen, or the

anarchy of mobs ; and by the developement of such sovereignty, not so much from the writing upon the parchment, as upon the mind and heart of the people ; by the check upon the empire of disease ; by the dissemination of moral joys and intellectual tastes and pleasures. Why, what was the state of the law in this reign ? In this reign anarchy was frequently wild and passionate. In one northern rebellion, eight hundred persons were executed, and scarcely a village or town was there, between Wetherby and Newcastle, a distance of ninety miles, in which was not some gibbet, with its dead body dangling therefrom. The queen herself, like her father, sought to reign absolutely. Her visits to her nobles were frequently invasions, ruinous invasions they dared not refuse to receive ; and in many instances she left a spoliation behind her. She visited in 1578, Mr. Rookwood, the Lord of Euston Hall, near Norwich, a catholic gentleman, yet a zealous subject to her government, and how did she behave there ?

A Richard Topelyffe, who seems to have been a most zealous opponent of that faith, in a letter to the Earl of Shrewsbury, dated August 30th, of this same year, thus speaks of the circumstance :—

“The next good news (but in account the highest), her majesty hath served God with great zeal and comfortable examples: for by her council two notorious papists, young Rookwood, (the master of Euston Hall, where her majesty did lie upon Sunday now a fortnight) and one Downes, a gent., were both committed, the one to the town-prison at Norwich, the other to the county-prison there, for obstinate papistry,” with seven others, whom he mentions, “for badness of belief.” “This Rookwood,” he adds, “is a papist of kind newly crept out of his late wardship. Her majesty, by some means I know not, was lodged at his house, Euston, far unmeet for her Highness, but fitter for the blackguard; nevertheless, (the gentleman brought into her majesty’s presence by like device) her excellent majesty gave to Rookwood ordinary thanks for his bad house, and her fair hand to kiss; after which it was braved at: but my Lord Chamberlain, nobly and gravely understanding that Rookwood was excommunicated for papistry, called him before him; demanded of him how he durst presume to attempt her real presence, he, unfit to accompany any Christian person.” The unfortunate gentleman was then committed; his house was ransacked, under a frivolous



pretext of a piece of the queen's plate having been missed during her stay there, when an image of "Our Lady" was found in a hay-rick, which, "for greatness, for gayness, and workmanship, I did never see a match;" this image the queen commanded to the fire, which, in her sight, by the country-folk was quickly done, to her content, and the unspeakable joy of every one but some one or two who had sucked of the idol's poisoned milk." The unfortunate Rookwood was afterwards fined heavily for his crime in presuming to "attempt her real presence," and ultimately died in Bury gaol, in June, 1598; the necessities of his family compelled them subsequently to dispose of the property of Euston.

How flagrant was this outrage upon every principle of justice, religion, honesty, and gratitude. The gaols were the regions of loathsome and infectious disease, which sometimes broke forth, and swept with havoc through the Court. Twenty catholics, of good family, imprisoned for their faith, all died in August, 1578, of the gaol-fever in York Castle. Meantime the enlargement of London excited terror and alarm, and its further extension was prohibited by proclamation. These are hints revealing to us the state of the nation. Facts,

like these, are torches, by the aid of which we travel again through the past; they enable us to realize the old times. Glimpses of a coming morning were glowing and brightening through all the dwellings of the land, but as yet, it was but a semi-barbarous age. "At the vigils and fairs every wanton might dance her will." At the table of the queen, by the queen herself, the meat was conveyed to the mouth with the fingers, as forks were yet undiscovered. A justice of the peace and magistrate was defined to be "a person, that for half-a-dozen chickens would dispense with half-a-dozen penal statutes." The streets of London, by day, were openly infested by highwaymen and thieves; and gallowses were erected for their punishment in the city. Let these be taken as index fingers, for the instruction of those who look back to this as the Ideal Age. We do not present these facts in order that an opinion may be formed by them alone. Let these be weighed with other facts, and it will be found that that too was a day of beautiful and certain progress, and regarded by the side of preceding reigns, worthy to be called THE GOLDEN AGE.



CHAPTER IX.

“MERRIE ENGLAND.”

MERRY England in the old time, Queen Bess and Merry England, are ever associated together in our thoughts. Will it be possible to recall the Domestic Life as it was in that day? Can we stroll in imagination through old chambers of old houses? Can we sit by the fireside, and listen to the tale of fear? Can we respond to the salutations of the early morning, and hie away, in the merry spring or summer time, to the woods or the hills, with the rural sporters and festive girls and boys? Can we realise the men and the women of those days, in their language, and manners, and costume? Can we make all allowances for their superstitions, for their vices, rather of education than disposition, and arrive at something like a fair estimate of character?—For this is History—the presentation to us so vividly of the past, that our sym-

pathies are enlisted immediately, for the scenery and for all its varieties of human characters.—History is not merely the narrative of events, but the exhibition, with every propriety of colour and of form, of the spirit and the body of the time. Ah, how difficult it is to realise the pursuits of that day,

“ Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers—
Nothing we see of Nature that is ours.”

We have but little time for enjoyment, and the enjoyment of which we partake is frequently by no means of an exhilarating character,—the low tap-room, the crowded meeting, the gaming-table : we have no desire to return to the mere festivities of the times of Queen Bess. We shall find much of exception may be taken here, but we seem to have outlived the idea of enjoyment—the playfulness of disposition which should equally be enjoyed by the boy, and the old man, if life has been passed in a truly healthy spirit, this is gone. It is not so much the kind of amusement we would inculcate, as the idea of relaxation—the appropriation of some portion of time to the enlivening and invigorating the spirits and the blood.

The first of May—May-day in the time of our “ Virgin Queen.”—We cannot look at it



near at hand ; but how beautiful a picture it seems set in the frame of the Domestic Life of the period. At midnight—not a very nice time, oh, forefathers of ours—but at midnight, all the young people of the village, the parish, or the town; were wont to assemble, and away to the groves and to the woods, separating themselves into companies ; some went in one direction—some in another ; these to the hills and mountains—those to the neighbouring glades, and wild gardens, and forests : the night was spent in pastimes and sports ; and when the time is remembered, and the promiscuous mingling together of the youth of both sexes, we can very well credit the accusation of old Stubbs. In his “Anatomy of Abuses” he says, “I have heard it credibly reported, by men of great gravity, credit, and reputation, that of forty, threescore, or an hundred maidens going to the wood, there have scarcely the third part of them returned home as they went.” From the wood they brought home with them, to the village, the May-pole drawn by thirty or forty yoke of oxen—both it, and the oxen covered with May, and all kinds of flowers ; it was set up, then, upon the village green, covered with handkerchiefs and flags,—and all around it were erected halls and bowers

of green boughs, and garlands of flowers, and
gay festoons of blossoming and budding arches.
Thus the day was kept in its neighbourhood,
with the dance, the drink, and the song.

"The May-pole is up—
Now give me the cup,
I'll drink to the garlands around it;
But first unto those
Whose hands did compose
The glory of flowers that crowned it."

The town and the country, on this merry
May-day, equally rejoiced: but it is of impor-
tance to notice that all this merriment was of
such a cast as none of the chaste damsels of
the present day would descend to.

BROWNE, in "Britannia's Pastorals," in enu-
merating the gifts given by "the Lady of the
May," "the May Queen, who, while the mer-
riment goes on around her, calls for the merry
dancers one by one, and graces them with va-
rious presents; to one a garland interwove with
roses; to another a carved hook; a well-wrought
serip to another; a kiss to another; her garter
to another." Several of these presents show a
rude state of mind, more in accordance with an
age of inebriated passion, than the light and
which seems to gather round the



rural rites of the first of May. The poets poured forth their raptures upon the rites of that day ; and when it died out, they poured forth their elegies in memory of it : in one published anonymously, under the title of “Pasquies Palinodia,” we have the following mournful dirge :—

“Stay, quoth my Muse, and here behold a sign
Of harmless mirth, and honest neighbourhood,
Where all the parish did in one combine
To mount the rod of peace, and none withstood :
When no capricious constables disturb them,
Nor justice of the peace did seek to curb them,
Nor peevish puritan, in railing sort,
Nor overwise churchwarden spoiled the sport.

Happy the age, and harmless were the days,
For then true love and amity were found,
When every village did a Maypole raise,
And Whitsun ales and May games did abound ;
And all the lusty youngers, in a rout,
With merry lasses danced the rod about.
Then friendship to their banquets bid the guests,
And poor men fared the better for their feasts.
The lords of castles, manors, towns, and towers,
Rejoiced when they beheld the farmers flourish,
And would come down unto the summer bowers
To see the country gallants dance the morrice.”

HERRICK, a poet of the following age, is, however, the great May-day Poet,—and his

verses are so graphic and beautiful, that they shall be cited.

"Get up, get up, for shame, the blooming Morn
Upon her wings presents the god unshorn.
See how Aurora throws her fair
Fresh-quilted colours through the air ;
Get up, sweet slug-abed, and see
The dew-bespangling herb and tree.
Each flower has wept, and bow'd toward the east,
Above an hour since, yet you not drest ;
Nay, not so much as out of bed ;
When all the birds have matins said,
And sung their thankful hymns ; 'tis sin,
Nay, profanation, to keep in,
Whereas a thousand virgins on this day
Spring, sooner than the lark, to fetch in May.

Rise, and put on your foliage, and be seen
To come forth, like the spring-time, fresh and green.
And, sweet as Flora, take no care
For jewels for your gown or hair ;
Fear not—the leaves will strew
Gems in abundance upon you ;
Besides, the childhood of the day has kept,
Against you come, some orient pearls unwept.
Come and receive them, while the light
Hangs on the dew-locks of the night ;
And Titan on the eastern hill
Retires himself, or else stands still
Till you come forth. Wash, dress, be brief in praying ;
Few beads are best when once we go a-Maying.

Come, my Corinna, come ; and, coming, mark
How each field turns a street, each street a park

Made green, and trimm'd with trees ; see how
 Devotion gives each house a bough
 Or branch ; each porch, each door, ere this
 An ark, a tabernacle is,
 Made up of white-thorn neatly interwove ;
 As if here were those cooler shades of love.
 Can such delights be in the street
 And open fields, and we not see 't ?
 Come, we'll abroad, and let's obey
 The proclamation made for May ;
 And sin no more, as we have done, by staying ;
 But, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

There's not a budding boy, or girl, this day,
 But is got up, and gone to bring in May.
 A deal of youth, ere this, is come
 Back, and with white-thorn laden home.
 Some have despatched their cakes and cream
 Before that we have left to dream ;
 And some have wept, and woo'd, and plighted troth,
 And chose their priest, ere we can cast off sloth :
 Many a green gown has been given ;
 Many a kiss, both odd and even ;
 Many a glance, too, has been sent
 From out the eye, love's firmament ;
 Many a jest told of the key's betraying
 This night, and locks pick'd, yet we're not a Maying.

Come, let us go, while we are in our prime,
 And take the harmless folly of the time.
 We shall grow old apace, and die
 Before we know our liberty.
 Our life is short, and our days run
 As fast away as does the sun ;

And as a vapour, or a drop of rain
Once lost, can ne'er be found again,
So when or you or I are made
A fable, song, or fleeting shade ;
All love, all liking, all delight
Lies drown'd with us in endless night.
Then, while time serves, and we are but decaying,
Come, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying."

Merry was this May time, with morris dances, and milkmaid's dances. The young women from the village with blythe cheeks and gay attire, bright scarfs and ribbons, and garlands, came dancing before their customers, doors, with one of their number in the centre, supporting a brilliant pyramid of May flowers, and polished silver cups, tankards and salvers, borrowed for the occasion.

From spring to winter, from May to December; but our fathers found the winter, if "frosty," yet "kindly;" the merriment was even greater in the hall than on the village green. With ceremony, and a very merry noise, the Yule faggot, or a Christmas block was brought into the house. This was usually supplied by the carpenter of the family; and as we see now, so then also, all places were covered with ivy and holly. This custom was probably founded on the very natural idea, that at this bleak and unpleasant season of the year, whatever is bright

may be considered as an emblem of joy and victory. Besides, the superstition of our fathers led them to believe, that a *malignant spirit* was envious of, and interested in destroying these signals of their triumph. "Against the feast of Christmas," says Stowe, the old chronicler, "every man's house, as also their parish churches, were decked with holm, ivie, bayes, and whatsoever the season of the yeare afforded to be green. The conduits and standards in the street were likewise garnished; amongst the which I read, that in the year 1444, by tempest of thunder and lightning, on the 1st, of February, at night, Paul's steeple was fired, but with great labour quenched. And toward the morning of Candlemass day, at the Leaden Hall in Cornhill, a standard of toll being set up in the midst of the pavement, fast in the ground, nayled full of holm and ivy, for disport of Christmas to the people, was torn up and cast down by the *malignant spirits*, (as was thought) and the stones of the pavement all about were cast in the streets, and into divers houses, so that the people were sore aghast at the great tempests."

Every season of the year brought its own merry season, within doors and without. We have Plough Monday, Shrove Tuesday, Holy

Thursday, and Good Friday; indeed, there was no end to the list of holidays observed with more or less enthusiasm by the English. In the olden time there was an open handed hospitality in villages and towns, but especially in London: tables, upon these occasions, were plentifully spread in the open air, and neighbour fed with neighbour—the elder folks would there, before their doors, and beneath their branching trees, meet together and talk, while the youths and maidens danced and tripped away until moonlight. All the festivities were of a blythe and lively character, some nations contrive, even in their merry doings, to infuse a spice of dolorousness,—but most of the festivals were celebrated with the kindling of fires, the spreading of tables and provisions, the wreathing and dancing beneath the bay and the garland; but all these festivities were of a local character: some were more general. Wakes—the vigil of some particular saint—were at first kept in churches during the night, but as this led to some abuses, the custom was discontinued, but not the wake. From one end of the kingdom to the other, from north to south it would appear that, among the country villages, during the reign of Elizabeth and her two immediate successors, wakes formed one

of the principal amusements of the peasantry, and were anticipated with all eagerness and expectation. The fair was a greater wake, and was held in a more central situation ; its period and duration were proclaimed by law. It was a scene of extensive business, as well as of pleasure, for before provincial cities had attained either wealth or consequence, all communication between them was difficult, and neither the necessities or elegancies of life could be procured but at stated times, and at fixed depôts. It was usual to go fifty or a hundred miles to one of those fairs, in order both to purchase goods, and accommodations for the ensuing year, and to dispose of the superfluous products of art or cultivation. In the reign of Henry VII., the monks of the Priors of Maxtoke, in Warwickshire, and of Bicester, in Oxfordshire, laid in their annual stores of common necessities at Stourbridge Fair in Cambridgeshire, notwithstanding the two cities of Oxford and Coventry were in their immediate neighbourhood. Many country towns were permitted to hold a fair, conditionally, that they exhibited a certain number of stage plays. The diversions of the period were very numerous, and very few of them very refined ; archery, hunting, especially otter hunting ; hurling, fal-

conry, bear and bull baiting; and the more gentle amusement of angling, pitching the bar, leaping hedges and ditches, racket, and shooting the broad arrow, were also favourite amusements. Hentzner, after describing a bear-baiting, says, "to this entertainment there followed another, that of whipping a blinded bear; which is performed by five or six men standing circularly, with whips, which they exercise on him without mercy, as he cannot escape from them because of his chain. He defends himself with all his force and skill, throwing down those that come within his reach and are not active enough to get out of it, and tearing their whips out of their hands, and breaking them." Elizabeth partook of these rude sports. A cotemporary writer says, "This day she appoints a Frenchman to doe feats upon a rope, in the Conduit Court: to-morrow she has commanded the bears, the bull, and the apes to be baited, in the tilt yard; and on Wednesday she will have solemn dancing." Like her subjects, the queen was fond of noisy entertainments; during her meals she listened to twelve trumpets, and two kettle drums, which together with fifes, cornets, and side drums, made the hall ring for half an hour together. And now the theatre came into vogue, superseding by its tragic, and melo-dra-

matic, and comic scenes, the old monkish mysteries and moralities : the first licences were granted in 1574, and so rapid was the progress of these exhibitions in public favour, that by the early part of the seventeenth century, fifteen licenced theatres were opened to the inhabitants of London. A flag was usually hoisted over the door, and the admission varied from one shilling to a penny or two-pence ; the critics sat on the stage, and were furnished with pipes and tobacco ; the curtain was not drawn up, but was drawn back ; and there appears to have been no change of scenery, but over the scene was written the name of the piece, in large characters ; one dramatic piece comprised the whole of the entertainment ; the acting usually began about one in the afternoon and lasted two hours ; the audience, before the amusement began, entertained themselves by reading, playing at cards, drinking ale, or smoking tobacco. The stage is not a school of morality now, but it must have been far worse then ; the exhibitions and the utterances were frequently full of indecency, yet they were patronized by the most refined minds of the day ; there can be no wonder that the Puritans made so fierce an attack upon them, and, had not that attack har

monized with the good sense of the people, it could not have been so successful as it was.

In chronicling the doings of Merry England in the days of Queen Bess, every reader who loves the orderly, not to say Christian proprieties of life, will be pained to learn that Sunday was the high day of festivity and folly ; Sunday was regarded in the light, merely, of a holiday : her Majesty selected that day, more frequently than any other, for the representation of plays at court for her own amusement ; but by her licence, granted to Burbage, 1574, she authorized the performance of them at the public theatre, *on Sundays only*, out of the hours of prayer. Five years after, Gosson, in his " School of Abuse," complains that the players, " because they are allowed to play every Sunday, make four or five Sundays every week." To limit this abuse an order was issued by the Privy Council, in July, 1591, purporting that no plays should be publicly exhibited on Thursdays, because, on that day bear baiting and similar pastimes had usually been practised ; and in an injunction to the lord mayor, four days after, the representation of plays on Sunday was utterly condemned, for the same reason, namely, that the theatres were crowded and the bear baitings forsaken. When the queen visited the

Cambridge University, we read that on a Sunday morning she attended service in the King's College Chapel, and in the evening the body of this solemn edifice was converted into a temporary theatre; she was there gratified with a representation of the “*Aulularia*,” of Plautus this seems to us most offensive, but probably it shocked no tastes at that time. The practice of performing dramatic pieces in churches was introduced with the mysteries and moralities of the middle ages; the Sundays of the days of Queen Bess resembled the modern Sunday of Paris. So also, when her majesty visited Oxford University, we find the following record in “*Nichols' Royal Progresses* :”—

“On Sunday, September 1st., her Majesty was indisposed in the morning, but was entertained in her chamber by a ‘Latin oration, with two Greek verses at the end,’ delivered by ‘a very pretty boy, named Peter Carew,’ with which she was much pleased. In the afternoon she attended Divine service, but was not present at a Latin play called ‘*Marcus Geminus*,’ which was exhibited in the evening on a stage erected in Christ Church Hall, though on hearing it highly commended by the Spanish ambassador, Don Guzman de Sylva, she remarked, ‘In troth, I will lose no more sport

hereafter, for the good report I hear of these your good doings."

But the doings at the famous Kenilworth give us an insight into the times, the amusements, and the follies, the observance of the Sabbath, and the delicacy and refinement of taste. Master Laneham, one of the queen's ushers, has admitted us into the courtly tastes and fashions.

On Thursday Elizabeth enjoyed the sport of bear-baiting, then in high favour with the polite circles. The bears had been brought especially from London; and the masters of her majesty's games had the chamberlain's warrant to travel peaceably with them, and to press all ban-dogs that should be needful. They were brought into the inner court, for the especial diversion of the queen and her ladies. The imposing spectacle is described with much unction by Master Laneham as follows:—
"It was a sport very pleasant of those beasts; to see the bear, with his pink eyes, leering after his enemies' approach, the nimbleness and wait of the dog to take his advantage, and the force and experience of the bear again to avoid the assault: If he was bitten in one place how he would pinch in another to get free; that if he was taken once, then

what shift, with biting, with clawing, with roaring, tossing, and tumbling, he would work to wind himself from them; and when he was loose, to shake his ears twice or thrice, with the blood and the slaver about his visnomy, was a matter of a *goodly relief*." The bear-baiting took place in the day-time, and at night there was "very strange and sundry kinds of fireworks," which, by the way, were then so new as to excite great wonder and delight. Friday and Saturday were too damp and gloomy for out-door recreation; but on the ensuing Sunday, "after divine service in the parish church," and "a fruitful sermon there in the forenoon, a "Merry Marriage" was performed. The procession was set in order in the tilt-yard, to make it show in the castle before the great court, where the queen beheld it from a window. There were "sixteen wights, riding-men, and well beseen;" the bridegroom, "in his father's tawny worsted jacket," a straw hat, with a capital crown steeplewise on his head; a pair of harvest-gloves on his hands, as a sign of good husbandry; a pen and inkhorn at his back, for he would be known to be bookish; lame of a leg, that in his youth was broken at foot-ball; well beloved of his mother, who lent him a muffler

for a napkin, that was tied to his girdle for (fear of) losing it. It was no small sport to mark this minion in his full appointment; that, through good tuition, became as formal in his action as had he been a bridegroom indeed." The morris-dancers followed, with maid Marian, and the fool; bride-maids "as bright as a breast of bacon," of thirty years old apiece; a freckled-face red-headed lubber, with the bride-cup; the "worshipful bride, thirty-five years old, of colour brown bay, not very beautiful indeed, but ugly, foul, and ill-favoured;" and lastly, many other damsels "for bride-maids, that for favour, attire, for fashion, and cleanliness, were as meet for such a bride as a tureen ladle for a porridge pot." This ridicule of a rustic ceremonial, endeared to the country people, did no great honour to the good taste of Leicester as a country lord, and could have been anything but gratifying to many who witnessed it. "By my troth," says Laneham, however, "it was a lively pastime; I believe it would have moved a man to a right merry mood, though it had been told him that his wife lay dying."

CHAPTER X.

GREAT MEN.

FOREMOST of all the eminent and illustrious courtiers of this reign must be mentioned Sir Philip Sidney. His name is ineffaceably inscribed upon the memorials of the times; and although he is not regarded as the first poet, first statesman, or first scholar, it does not seem too presumptuous to claim for him the place of the most illustrious *man* of his age. In all the qualifications which are supposed to make the courtier, neither in England or upon the Continent, did there exist his equal: he may be referred to as the most perfect specimen of the gentleman of the days of Elizabeth: he united high courage with generous and most refined courtesy; and to a spirit most fitted from its ease and elegance to dwell in the neighbourhood of courts, he added a lofty patriotism which made him bold enough to

speaking when opportunity and necessity offered : the craving, covetous ambition of low minds, of which he saw so much, of which his own family furnished him with one most painful instance in the Earl of Leicester, this was far from the thoughts of Sidney ; he appears to have lived ever beneath the more important guiding lights of duty, rather than beneath the stormy gleamings of wild and feverish desire. The bravery of the young courtier was shown in the letter he addressed to Elizabeth upon her proposed marriage with the Duke of Anjou. Assuredly the queen had never asked his opinion, had she not supposed that it would be favourable to the match. But thus solicited, he addressed her very boldly : he says—"These," speaking of the queen's Protestant subjects—"These, how will their hearts be galled, if not aliened, when they shall see you take a husband, a Frenchman and a Papist, in whom, (howsoever fine wits may find further dealings and painted excuses,) the very common people well know this, that he is the son of a Jezebel of our age ; that his brother made oblation of his own sister's marriage ; the easier to make massacre of his brethren of belief, that he himself contrary to his promise and all gracefulness, having his liberty and principal estates by

the Hugonots' means, did sack La Charité, and utterly spoil them with fire and sword ! This, I say, even at first sight, gives occasion to all truly religious to abhor such a master, and, consequently, to diminish much of the hopeful love they have of you." This kind of speech was plain enough, but its writer fared better than poor Stubbs : indeed the letter of Sidney is supposed to have moved her majesty in some degree to the final determination to which she made up her mind. And Elizabeth watched over the welfare of the young soldier ; and when he was about to depart from England with Drake on an expedition against the Spaniards, in the West Indies, she especially commanded him to stay at home, lest she should lose the jewel of her dominions. Whether Sir Philip was in reality offered the crown of Poland, and declined, seems doubtful ; but beyond all doubt he stood high in the favour and estimation of foreign courts, and was universally regarded as the pride and pattern of his time. The victor over all hearts, the man of whom the English monarch and foreign princes were alike proud, was unsuccessful in the world where it might be supposed all homage would await him—the world of love. Lady Penelope Devereux, whom he has cele-

brated under the name of Stella, was the object of Sidney's ardent attachment. She contracted another marriage, and Sir Philip solaced himself by imitating her example, and marrying Frances, the daughter of Sir Francis Walsingham.

When the war between the people of the Netherlands and Spain was raging, Elizabeth appointed Sidney governor of Flushing. After the exhibition of conspicuous and successful bravery, Sidney and his troops met a force of above three thousand marching to relieve Zutphen, a town of Guelderland. An engagement ensued almost immediately, under the walls of the town. Sidney's horse was shot under him, and while making a third charge, he received a musket bullet in the left thigh, a little below the knee.

He was carried out of the battle-field, "in which sad progress, passing along by the rest of the army, where his uncle the general was, and being thirsty with excess of bleeding, he called for some drink, which was presently brought him; but as he was putting the bottle to his mouth, he saw a poor soldier carried along, who had eaten his last at the same feast, ghastly, casting up his eyes at the bottle; which Sir Philip perceiving, took it from his head

before he drank, and delivered it to the poor man with these words: 'Thy necessity is yet greater than mine.'"

After many days of severe suffering, he died at Arnheim, on the 7th October, 1586, experiencing all the consolations that the tender attentions of Lady Sidney, and his faithful secretary, William Temple, could bestow. The body was conveyed to England, lay many days in state, and was interred in Old St. Paul's Cathedral, attended by seven deputies, one for each of the Seven United Provinces, and by a great number of peers, his friends, and others. There was a general mourning for him observed throughout the land—*the first of the kind* known in England. The Universities published three volumes of Elegies on his death. Spenser composed one, under the title of *Astrophel*.—The summary of his character is thus given in the *Retrospective Review*: "Sir Philip Sidney was a gentleman finished and complete, in whom mildness was associated with courage, erudition mollified by refinement, and courtliness dignified by truth. He is a specimen of what the noble English character was capable of producing, when foreign admixtures had not destroyed its simplicity, or politeness debased its honour.—Of such a stamp was Sir Philip Sydney, and

as such every Englishman has reason to be proud of him." "He trod," says the author of "*Effigies Poeticæ*," "from his cradle to his grave, amid incense and flowers, and died in a dream of glory. On the whole, it is evident, that in his own time there never was a man more a favourite in public or in private life, in the court or the camp, as an author or as a hero; nor will the statement require any extensive modification, if we refer to times other than his own—or, in a word, to posterity. If his merits were very nicely balanced in comparison with those of many men who have lived and died in partial neglect, it might be found there had been some of the illusions of romance in this excessive admiration; but there would still be sufficient ground for pronouncing, with the writer in the Review just named, Sir Philip Sidney one of the noblest men of Old England."*

Penshurst, in Kent, will always be associated with the name of Sidney; there he was born: and there is an entire and beautiful harmony between the best productions of his mind and the scenery. There still is to be seen "*Sidney's Oak*," so celebrated by Jonson, and thither the pilgrims of romance and poetry frequently

* Old England.

travel to retrace the path so frequently trodden by the heroism and genius of the times of Queen Bess. "Rare old Ben," no doubt, had often been there, and hence the cheerful and hearty spirit in which he writes.

"Thou art not, Penshurst, built to envious show
Of touch, or marble : nor canst boast a row
Of polished pillars, or a roof of gold :
Thou hast no lanthorn whereof tales are told,
Or stir, or courts ; but stand'st an ancient pile,
And these grudged at, art revered the while.
Thou joy'st in better marks ; of soil, of air,
Of wood, of water ; therein thou art fair ;
Thou hast thy walks for health as well as sport ;
Thy Mount to which the Dryads do resort,
Where Pan and Bacchus their high feasts have made
Beneath the broad beech and the chesnut shade.
That taller tree, which of a *nut* was set
At his great birth, where all the Muses met :
There in the writhed bark are cut the names
Of many a sylvan, taken with his flames,
And thence the ruddy satyrs oft provoke
The lighter Fauns to reach thy Ladies' Oak.

And here, to close our notice of Sir Philip Sidney, is a specimen of his style of writing the Introduction to the celebrated "*Arcadia*:"—

"So that the third day after, in the time that the Morning did strew roses and violets in the heavenly floor against the coming of the sun. The nightingales (striving the one with

the other, which could, in most dainty variety recount their wrong-caused sorrows) made them put off their sleep, and rising from under a tree (which that night had been their pavilion), they went on their journey, which by-and-bye welcomed Musidorus's eyes, (wearied with the wasted soil of Laconia), with welcome prospects. There were hills, which garnished their proud heights with stately trees; humble valleys, whose base estate seemed comforted with the refreshing of silver rivers; meadows enamelled with all sorts of pleasant flowers; thickets which, being lined with most pleasant shade, were witnessed so, too, by the cheerful disposition of many well tuned birds; each pasture stored with sheep, feeding with pleasant security; while the pretty lambs, with bleating oratory, craved the dam's comfort; here a shepherd's boy piping as though he should never grow old; there a young shepherdess knitting, and withal singing, and it seemed that her voice comforted her hands to work, and her hands kept time to her voice music. As for the houses of the country, (for many houses came under their eye), no two being one by the other, and yet not so far off, as that it barred mutual succour; a show as it were of an accompaniable solitariness, and of a

civil wildness. 'I pray you,' said old Musidorus, (then first unsealing his long silent lips), 'what countries be these we pass through, which are so divers in show, the one wanting no store, the other having no store but of want?' The country answered, 'Claius, where you were cast ashore, and now are passed through, is Laconia; but this country (where you now set your foot), is Arcadia.' "

The reader will immediately see the character of the "Arcadia," Sir Philip Sidney's most memorable work. It is overcharged with affected sentiment; its deformities are innumerable as its beauties; but, unfortunately, the thick foliage of the former conceals the latter. Beauties are unquestionably there, but frequently wholly obscured, either by lavish ornament, or ridiculous eupheuisms.

Sydney was the nephew of the royal favourite, ROBERT DUDLEY, EARL OF LEICESTER; and no one can have looked at all at the events of this period without meeting with his name. It is a name that, whether in romance or reality reflects no honour, the portrait drawn of him by the master hand of Scott, in the romance of "Kenilworth," dark as it is, is yet only all too favourable in its colourings. Dudley had, during the previous reign, suffered persecution,

but the great bond of sympathy between himself and Elizabeth was one perfectly in keeping with the superstitions of the times; he was born the same day and the same hour with Elizabeth—it is not clear that there were not between them some dark and quite unexplained passages, but be that so, or not, the whole web of Leicester's life was woven in darkness, although no event happened entirely to alienate from him the affections of his royal mistress—affections, we say, for it was because Elizabeth was queen that she was not Leicester's wife. Dark, plotting, mischievous, his character never stood so fair that purity could contemplate it with any complacency. The taste that could select this man from the court as the favourite was not a superfine one. From the descriptions given to us of him, there must have ever attached to him the covert and suspicious demeanour of a sort of man-about-town-ishness that might impose upon a gentle, unsuspecting Amy, but which we might suppose to be tried in vain on a woman like Elizabeth. We could suppose that Shakspeare had seen him, and that he had sat in the chambers of his imagination for Iago—cold, daring, audacious, evil in every action—this is the verdict posterity has pronounced upon him.

When the queen first appeared before us, after her elevation to the position of queen, it was in company with Leicester, her Master of Horse, and on terms of the closest intimacy he continued with her, during the whole period of his after life. There was a time when it was universally expected that the queen intended to make him her husband; her partiality to him was obvious to all; her rejection of the hands of foreign suitors wore the appearance of an engagement of the heart nearer home. He lavished every attention that pomp and art could devise, in order to commend himself to the queen; married he had already been, and about this juncture he lost his wife. Sir Walter Scott has only sketched, in his magnificent Romance of "Kenilworth," the floating legends and traditions of the period, which all tended to convict him of murder. No certain evidence was produced, but the highest presumptive evidence, conspired with circumstances to brand upon him the guilt of the ordering and arrangement of the crime; nor did he escape the imputation of other murders, and of meditating the death of his second wife. It is supposed that she forestalled him in crime, and that he died by poison. A curious study for a psychologist is Leicester. This notoriously bad man had

defended frequently at his personal risk the Puritans against the anger of the queen. Inhuman as he was he was the founder of hospitals. This seems to imply the desire to offer, if possible, some expiation for heavy unatoned guilt; yet all records describe him as utterly wanting in moral sensibility. His acuteness and penetration were only of a low and servile kind, while of every kind of higher, nobler wisdom, he was utterly destitute.

The records of the Court of Elizabeth would be quite incomplete without some slight account of Essex, the most celebrated of the successors of Leicester in the royal estimation, more especially as the regard of the queen in this instance has perhaps been misunderstood, and as it exercised considerable influence over her mind and reign. It is needless to trace all the steps by which he rose to royal favour. He was a rash and impetuous young man, and had more than once offended the queen before he gave the final offence in 1600. Two years before he differed from Elizabeth in respect to some Irish appointment; Essex was so imprudent and ungallant as to turn his back upon her with the most unequivocal evidences of anger and scorn. The queen, naturally *stung* by the insult, gave him a smart box on

the ear, and bade him go to the devil. The earl immediately clapped his hands on his sword, and swore that he would neither take nor put up with such an affront, and that he would not have taken it from Henry VIII. He then rushed out of the palace, and went to his country seat at Wanstead; there he remained for months, deaf to all the entreaties of his friends that he would make a proper submission, or at least leave them to conclude a reconciliation. Yet this offence was at last forgiven, and Essex most unfortunately was appointed Governor of Ireland. He suspected Robert Cecil and Sir Walter Raleigh of conspiring against him at the English court, and he very unexpectedly—and indeed imprudently returned—he hastened to the queen, and was received by her with every appearance of affection, and yet almost immediately afterwards he was apprehended and detained a prisoner for nearly twelve months. He was then released, but ordered to keep away from court. He had a valuable patent for some sweet wines; it was a valuable monopoly, and about to expire; he requested of the queen its renewal, she refused it, saying that “in order to manage an ungovernable beast it was necessary to stint it of its provender.” In this instance this mode of

treating the beast only exasperated it the more. Essex sought by force of arms to right himself. It was a most mad attempt, and of course signally failed. He became once more, and finally a prisoner, and then upon his trial, Bacon, (Francis Bacon, then a comparatively insignificant young man, whose genius Essex had seen and admired, and for the neglect of which he had sought to compensate by costly presents,) Bacon appeared against him as prosecutor for the queen. It was a deed worthy of the subsequent peculating and corrupt chancellor. Essex was condemned, in the course of his trial, and at his death, his noble nature brightened forth, for in his mind were elements capable of forming one of the noblest men of that age. He was the patron of genius and of art, he was the friend of Spenser, and of Jonson; he was tolerant, and for others, if not for himself, wise and brave, only unfitted to cope with the cunning of courts and the machinations of secret foes; he could not repel cunning by cunning, and fraud by fraud, he could not cringe with the supple spirit of a practised courtier, and therefore he terminated his life on the block, the 25th of February.

But Essex was Elizabeth's last favourite. Perhaps her affection for him partook, in some

degree, of the affection of the mother for a son. In Essex, more than any other of her favourites, there flamed out the high spirit of the Tudors. It is certain she regarded him with uncommon affection ; but he was the popular idol too, and when she went abroad, she beheld the people moody and disaffected. Their darling, the statesman, they loved so much better than the smooth and subtle Cecil, had been given up a sacrifice to courtly cunning and craft. The queen felt, too, that her last friend had been struck down by her own hand. She was aged, rapidly hastening to the grave ; she had nobody to engage her love ; she could not be sure that any one of all her servile, fawning courtiers, really loved her. After his execution she gave way to wild fits of unaccountable and ungovernable passion ; a secret and unexplained sorrow gnawed within ; she had but little comfort in life, and she wove around others the meshes of misery. Her life had been far from such nobility and purity that any extraordinary glory could be expected to illuminate its decline ; but the punishment of death, for the favourite, she knew to be the most noble and worthy, threw along her decline the deeper shades ; and these again, from this circumstance, became still more sombre and affecting

from an event which may be best recorded in connection with the death of the poor abject, although so potent a queen. That was the Age of Courtiers, but we would not have it supposed that none but courtiers were worthy of notice. There were, at that time, in England, some of the most illustrious names the land has ever produced. To mention the name of Shakspeare is quite superfluous, who was not, in his day, so much a dramatist, as the creator of the English Drama; and Spenser, too, the Poet Laureate, and the author of the "Fairly Queen,"—Spenser, whose poetry does indeed mirror the picturesque and allegoric age. He lived in comparative neglect until Essex patronised him, and lavished upon him his love and favour. Poor Spenser died broken-hearted in Ireland; he witnessed the destruction of his whole property by the rebels, and this event shook his soul, so that he never recovered himself. He was followed by an illustrious company to his grave in Westminster Abbey, near that of Chaucer: all the Poets followed, and cast their pens and sonnets upon his coffin. The Earl of Essex defrayed the whole cost of the funeral, and walked himself as a mourner. We had proposed to have said something of Ben Johnson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Sir

John Harrington, and others, illustrious for their genius, or their fame, for their nobility, or their prowess; now only, alas! illustrating the evanescence of Fame, and the fleeting glory of all great names. Those whose persons and names were then the objects of universal attention in their several spheres, are now passed silently by, even in so poor a book as this is.

CHAPTER XI.

THE LAST OF THE TUDORS.

THE work of the Tudor Dynasty was done: the time approached when Queen Elizabeth must die: as we have already intimated, the sun did not brighten at its setting. The queen had lost all heart for pleasure and gaiety; they had all left her, those great men who had either lent brilliancy to her court, or power to her sceptre. Burleigh was not—Walsingham was not—Leicester was not—Essex was not. She walked alone; all the old familiar faces had departed: still she pursued the round of political occupation—still she followed the amusements of other years; but she talked with the French ambassador, and owned herself weary of life.—She sighed, and her eyes filled with tears, as she adverted to the death of Essex, and mentioned that, being apprehensive, from his am-

bition, and the impetuosity of his temper, of his throwing himself into some rash design which would prove his ruin, she had counselled him, during the two last years, to content himself with pleasing her, and to forbear to treat her with the insolent contempt he had lately assumed; above all, not to touch her sceptre, lest she should be compelled to punish him by the laws of England, and not according to her own laws, which he had found too mild and favourable to give him any cause of fear.*—

At last a still more inveterate melancholy seized upon the queen. She was drawn to bed on the 21st of March, 1602, and there, three days afterward, she died.

We will, in conclusion, call our reader's attention to the following remarkable stories; the first is extracted from Dr. Birch's "Negotiations," and has been reprinted in the *Memoirs of the Peers of England during the reign of James*.

"The following curious story was frequently told by Lady Elizabeth Spelman, great granddaughter of Sir Robert Carey, brother of Lady Nottingham, and afterwards Earl of Monmouth, whose curious memoirs of himself were published a few years ago by Lord Corke:—

* Miss Aitkin.

When Catherine, Countess of Nottingham, was dying (as she did, according to his lordship's own account, about a fortnight before Queen Elizabeth), she sent to her majesty to desire that she might see her, in order to reveal something to her majesty, without the discovery of which she could not die in peace. Upon the queen's coming, Lady Nottingham told her that while the Earl of Essex lay under sentence of death, he was desirous of asking her majesty's mercy in the manner prescribed by herself during the height of his favour; the queen having given him a ring, which, being sent to her as a token of his distress, might entitle him to her protection. But the earl, jealous of those about him, and not caring to trust any of them with it, as he was looking out of his window one morning, saw a boy with whose appearance he was pleased; and, engaging him by money and promises, directed him to carry the ring, which he took from his finger and threw down, to Lady Scroope, a sister of the Countess of Nottingham, and a friend of his lordship, who attended upon the queen; and to beg of her that she would present it to her majesty. The boy, by mistake, carried it to Lady Nottingham, who showed it to her husband, the admiral, an enemy of Lord

Essex, in order to take his advice. The admiral forbade her to carry it, or return any answer to the message ; but insisted on her keeping the ring. The Countess of Nottingham having made this discovery, begged the queen's forgiveness ; but her majesty answered, '*God may forgive you, but I never can,*' and left the room with great emotion. Her mind was so much affected, that she never went to bed, nor took any sustenance from that instant ; for Camden is of opinion that her chief reason for suffering the earl to be executed, was his supposed obstinacy in not applying to her for mercy. . . .

"In confirmation of the time of the countess's death," continues the compiler, "it now appears from the parish register of Chelsea, extraeted by Mr. Lysons ('*Environs of London,*' ii. 120,) that she died at Arundel House, London, February 25th, and was buried the 28th, 1603. Her funeral was kept at Chelsea, March 21, and Queen Elizabeth died three days afterwards !"

"Now," says a writer in Knight's "*Old England,*" "we have a story to tell, too.—When, in 1564, Mary Queen of Scots married Darnley, she sent to her fair cousin of England a diamond ring, in the form of a heart, in token of the event, and her own affection. The ring

was accompanied by some Latin verses by the chief Scottish scholar and poet of his time, Buchanan, and which have been thus rendered into English :—

‘This gem behold, the emblem of my heart,
From which my cousin’s image, ne’er shall part;
Clear in its lustre, spotless does it shine,
’Tis clear and spotless, as this heart of mine.
What though the stone a greater hardness wears,
Superior firmness still the figure bears.’

According to information which has been presented to us with implicit faith on the part of our informants, that was the ring presented by Elizabeth to Essex, as being the most precious it was in her power to give him : that was the ring given by poor Essex to the boy, to be carried back to its giver in token he asked his life in a manner that would have made Elizabeth but too happy to grant it, and which being kept back by the Countess of Nottingham, induced Elizabeth to allow him to ‘perish’ in what she esteemed ‘his pride ;’ that was the ring which, returning into Elizabeth’s hand, when the Countess of Nottingham on her death-bed made her fearful revelations, subsequently passed into the hands of Elizabeth’s successor, and the original giver’s son, James.”*

* Old England, vol. ii., p.74.

We can present no better summary of the character of Elizabeth, than that drawn in the eloquent language of MR. MACAULAY ; “She surely was a great woman ; of all the sovereigns who exercised a power which seemingly was absolute, but which, in fact, depended for support on the love and confidence of their subjects, she was by far the most illustrious. It has often been alledged as an excuse for the misgovernment of her successors, that they only followed her example ; that precedents might be found in the transactions of her reign, for persecuting the Puritans, for levying money without the sanction of the House of Commons, for confining men without bringing them to trial, for interfering with the freedom of parliamentary debate. All this may be true ; but it is no good plea for her successors, and for this plain reason, that they were her successors : she governed one generation, they governed another ; and between the two generations there was almost as little in common as between the people of two different countries. It was not by looking at the particular measures which Elizabeth had adopted, but by looking at the great general principles of her government, that those who followed her were likely to learn the art of managing untractable subjects. If, instead of searching

the records of her reign for precedents which might seem to vindicate the mutilation of Prynne, and the imprisonment of Elliot; the Stuarts had attempted to discover the fundamental rules which guided her conduct in all her dealings with the people, they would have perceived that their policy was then most unlike hers, when, to a superficial observer it would have seemed most to resemble hers. Firm, haughty, sometimes unjust and cruel in her proceedings against individuals, or towards small parties, she avoided with care, or retracted with speed, every measure which seemed likely to alienate the great mass of the people. Elizabeth, before the House of Commons could address her, took out of their mouths the words they were about to utter, in the name of the nation. Her promises went beyond their desires. Her performance followed close upon her promise. She did not treat the nation as an adverse party, which had an interest opposed to hers, as a party to which she was to grant as few advantages as possible, and from which she was to extort as much money as possible. Her benefits were given, not sold; and when once given they never were withdrawn. She gave them, too, with a frankness, with an effusion of heart, a princely dignity, a motherly tenderness, which

enhanced their value. They were received by the sturdy country gentlemen, who came up to Westminster full of resentment, with tears of joy and shouts of "God save the Queen." Charles the First gave up half the prerogatives of his crown to the Commons ; and the Commons sent him in return the Grand Remonstrance."

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